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Security Council

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Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 9 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am transmitting herewith the record of the ceasefire violations by the Azerbaijani armed forces along the State border of the Republic of Armenia during the month of April 2018 (see annex I).*

I am also transmitting herewith the record of the ceasefire violations registered by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) during the month of April 2018 (see annex II).*

I kindly request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Zohrab **Mnatsakanyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* The annexes are being circulated in the language of submission only.

Please recycle

Annex I to the letter dated 9 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan along the State border with the Republic of Armenia, 1–30 April 2018

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
1 April	There were no shots		
2 April	**Tavush region**	**4**	Small arms and light weapons: 85
	Kolagir	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 46
	Aygedzor	1	
	Aygepar	1	
	Kayan	1	
3 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**4**	Small arms and light weapons: 5
	Aygedzor	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	Aygepar	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Aygedzor)
	Dovegh	1	
	Yeraskh	1	
4 April	**Tavush region**	**14**	Small arms and light weapons: 109
	Aygedzor	6	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 3
	Chinari	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 3
	Vazashen	3	
	Voskepar	1	
	Berkaber	1	
	Baghanis	1	
5 April	**Tavush region**	**2**	Small arms and light weapons: 22
	Chinari	1	
	Kayan	1	
6 April	**Tavush and Gegharkunik regions**	**12**	Small arms and light weapons: 193
	Aygedzor	4	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 8
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 70
	Movses	3	
	Kayan	1	
	Voskepar	1	
	Kutakan	1	
	Ttujur	1	
7 April	**Tavush and Gegharkunik regions**	**7**	Small arms and light weapons: 76
	Aygedzor	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3
	Aygepar	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Berkaber	1	
	Jil	1	
	Vahan	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
8 April	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**22**	Small arms and light weapons: 146
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 11
	Paravakar	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 21 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Vazashen	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 16
	Voskepar	1	
	Geghamasar	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	16	
9 April	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**28**	Small arms and light weapons: 658
	Aygedzor	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 14
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 20 (Aygedzor: 13; Paruyr Sevak: 7)
	Baghanis	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 15
	Voskepar	1	
	Geghamasar	1	
	Artanish	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	21	
10 April	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**13**	Small arms and light weapons: 61
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 4
	Paravakar	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 37 (Geghamasar: 30; Paruyr Sevak 7)
	Berkaber	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 3
	Jil	1	
	Geghamasar	3	
	Paruyr Sevak	6	
11 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**20**	
	Aygedzor	3	Small arms and light weapons: 469
	Chinari	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 89 (Aygedzor: 5; Berkaber: 1; Paruyr Sevak: 83)
	Berkaber	1	
	Baghanis	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 20
	Paruyr Sevak	22	
12 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**16**	Small arms and light weapons: 587
	Baghanis	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	Berkaber	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 211 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Paruyr Sevak	14	Large-calibre machine guns: 350
13 April	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**20**	Small arms and light weapons: 236
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 37 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Paravakar	5	Grenade launchers: 4
	Baghanis	2	Small-calibre mortars: 1 (Vahan)
	Jil	3	
	Vahan	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	8	
14 April	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**9**	Small arms and light weapons: 60
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 14
	Aygepar	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 42 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Movses	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
	Chambarak	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 28
	Paruyr Sevak	5	
15 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**10**	Small arms and light weapons: 68
	Aygedzor	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10
	Berkaber	3	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 29 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Paruyr Sevak	6	Large-calibre machine guns: 37
16 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**20**	Small arms and light weapons: 197
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 14
	Berkaber	4	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 5 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Kayan	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 112
	Sev Kar	1	
	Baghanis	6	
	Paruyr Sevak	7	
17 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**15**	Small arms and light weapons: 43
	Chinari	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5
	Movses	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Paruyr Sevak	12	Large-calibre machine guns: 68
18 April	**Tavush, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**10**	Small arms and light weapons: 219
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 30
	Movses	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 38 (Paruyr Sevak)
	Barekamavan	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 189
	Vahan	1	
	Ttujur	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	5	
19 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**15**	Small arms and light weapons: 102
	Aygedzor	8	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 1
	Yeraskh	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 7 (Aygedzor)
	Paruyr Sevak	6	Large-calibre machine guns: 35
20 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**8**	Small arms and light weapons: 152
	Aygedzor	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 1
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 18 (Aygedzor: 3; Chinari: 15)
	Paravakar	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 7
	Movses	1	
	Barekamavan	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	1	
21 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**5**	Small arms and light weapons: 80
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 15
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 15 (Aygedzor)
	Berkaber	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 76
	Paruyr Sevak	2	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
22 April	**Tavush and Ararat regions**	**9**	Small arms and light weapons: 106
	Aygedzor	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Movses)
	Movses	1	
	Paravakar	1	
	Vazashen	2	
	Kayan	1	
	Yeraskh	3	
23 April	**Vayots Dzor and Ararat regions**	**4**	Small arms and light weapons: 13
	Khndzorut	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4
	Paruyr Sevak	3	Large-calibre machine guns: 9
24 April	**Tavush, Syunik, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions**	**13**	Small arms and light weapons: 142 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Chambarak)
	Vazashen	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 4
	Berdavan	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Chapni	1	
	Chambarak	3	
	Vahan	1	
	Paruyr Sevak	2	
	Armash	1	
25 April	**Tavush region**	**5**	Small arms and light weapons: 17
	Aygedzor	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 6
	Movses	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Voskevan	1	
26 April	**There were no shots**		
27 April	**Tavush and Gegharkunik regions**	**20**	Small arms and light weapons: 305
	Aygedzor	4	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 40
	Aygepar	5	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 36 (Ttujur: 20; Vahan: 6; Chambarak: 10)
	Kolagir	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 50
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Ttujur	1	
	Vahan	2	
	Chambarak	3	
28 April	**Gegharkunik region**	**1**	Small arms and light weapons: 5
	Geghamasar	1	
29 April	**Tavush region**	**2**	Small arms and light weapons: 16
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 5
	Kirants	1	

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
30 April	**Tavush region**	**4**	Small arms and light weapons: 8
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5
	Movses	1	
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Barekamavan	1	

During the reporting period, one soldier of the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia was wounded by gunfire from the Azerbaijani side.

Annex II to the letter dated 9 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the line of contact with the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic), 1–30 April

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
1 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 302 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 18 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Shikhlyar)
2 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	32	Small arms and light weapons: 326 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 12 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Shikhlyar)
3 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	33	Small arms and light weapons: 476 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 14 (Jraberd: 1; Gjulistan: 13)
4 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	44	Small arms and light weapons: 373 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 46 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 12 (Karakhanbeyli: 2; Geytap: 10) Large-calibre machine guns: 42
5 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	38	Small arms and light weapons: 567 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Gjulistan 4)
6 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	24	Small arms and light weapons: 325 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 19 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Yarmja)
7 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	15	Small arms and light weapons: 192 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 28 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 5 (Gjulistan)
8 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	35	Small arms and light weapons: 381 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 3 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 11 (Nuzger) Large-calibre machine guns: 8
9 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 374 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 9 (Horadiz: 2; Kengerli: 7)
10 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	31	Small arms and light weapons: 234 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 11 (Karakhanbeyli: 1; Talish: 10)

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
11 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	25	Small arms and light weapons: 291 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 22 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 15 (Karakhanbeyli)
12 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	35	Small arms and light weapons: 487 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 19 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 7 (Chakhrli: 1; Taghibeyli: 1; Sarijanli: 2; Shurabad: 1; Levonarkh: 2)
13 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	46	Small arms and light weapons: 532 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 38 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Karachuk: 5; Gjulistan: 5) Large-calibre machine guns: 40 Grenade launchers: 3
14 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	25	Small arms and light weapons: 273 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 19 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 5 (Ashaghi Abdurakhmanli)
15 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	23	Small arms and light weapons: 146 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 18 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 5 (Kurapatkino)
16 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	24	Small arms and light weapons: 266 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7
17 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	34	Small arms and light weapons: 478 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 36 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Ashaghi Abdurakhmanli)
18 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	19	Small arms and light weapons: 207 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2 Grenade launchers: 3
19 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	35	Small arms and light weapons: 308 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 24
20 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	39	Small arms and light weapons: 457 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 22 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Kengerli) Large-calibre machine guns: 12
21 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	28	Small arms and light weapons: 245 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Kurapatkino)
22 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	16	Small arms and light weapons: 334 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 18

Date	*Direction*	*Incidents*	*Type of weapons/shots*
23 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	27	Small arms and light weapons: 232 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 15 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Ashaghi Veysali) Large-calibre machine guns: 12
24 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	28	Small arms and light weapons: 214 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Ashaghi Abdurakhmanli)
25 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	31	Small arms and light weapons: 319 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 12 Large-calibre machine guns: 3
26 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	40	Small arms and light weapons: 439 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 12 (Gjulistan) Large-calibre machine guns: 14
27 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 236 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 7 (Kengerli: 6; Jraberd: 1)
28 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	18	Small arms and light weapons: 168 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 9 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Levonarkh)
29 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	19	Small arms and light weapons: 274 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 13 (Kenderli: 3; Jraberd: 10)
30 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 274 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Korgan) Large-calibre machine guns: 6

During the reporting period, one soldier of the Defence Army of Artsakh was killed and two soldiers were wounded by gunfire from the Azerbaijani side.

United Nations S/2018/447

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 May 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On Wednesday, 9 May 2018, Israel carried out a heinous attack against the Kiswah area of Rif Dimashq governorate. At dawn, on Thursday, 10 May 2018, Israel committed another aggression against Syrian territory when it fired dozens of missiles at the Syrian capital, Damascus, and several governorates. Although Syrian air defence forces brought down most of the missiles, a number of civilians were nonetheless killed and injured in those attacks.

Those fresh Israel aggressions are part of the ongoing attacks that are being directed against the Syrian Arab Republic. The frequency of the acts of aggression committed by Israel has increased after the heinous tripartite attack that the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France carried out against the Syrian Arab Republic on 14 April 2018.

This latest aggression comes on the heels of the failure of Israel to protect and prevent the collapse of its proxy terrorist groups, which have failed to carry out the conspiracy to undermine the sovereignty and the territorial unity and integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Israel would not continue with its dangerous and hostile conduct were it not for the limitless and ongoing support that it receives from the Government of the United States of America, and the immunity from accountability that the United States, in coordination with the United Kingdom and France, provides Israel in the Security Council. That support and the immunity from accountability that Israel enjoys enable it to continue to practice terrorism and threaten regional and international peace and security.

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that its armed forces are ready and it has the right to repulse in a responsible and decisive manner any attack against its sovereignty and independence. Any efforts to support the crumbling terrorists is futile, because such brazen attacks will not prevent further progress from being made in the fight against terrorism throughout the territory of Syria.

The response of our armed forces to the latest Israeli aggression has taught the Israelis that the Syrian Arab Republic is determined to fulfil its sacred duty to defend the nation, protect its citizens and eradicate terrorism, regardless of its names, forms or manifestations, in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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The Syrian Arab Republic once again calls upon the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The Council must take resolute and immediate action to prevent the recurrence of Israeli aggression, and to hold Israel accountable for the acts of terrorism and crimes that it has committed against the Syrian people and for its ongoing support for terrorist organizations. Such conduct is in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 350 (1974) and 497 (1981), all of which reaffirm the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic over its entire territory and call upon Israel to withdraw immediately and completely from the territories it occupies.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Minister Plenipotentiary

United Nations S/2018/448

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 May 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing to inform you that, on 9 May 2018, the Saudi Air Defence Forces intercepted two Houthi ballistic missiles launched from inside Yemeni territory (Amran Governorate), targeting densely populated civilian areas in the capital city of Riyadh.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns in the strongest terms the continuation of the Houthi militias' indiscriminate terrorist ballistic missile attacks. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia notes with regret that the Security Council's inaction in the face of blatant violations of its resolutions, in particular the arms embargoes established pursuant to its resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015), has allowed Iran to furnish the Houthi terrorist militias with large and growing stockpiles of ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and sea mines. The Houthis have used, and will continue to use, these illegally obtained weapons to threaten the regional stability of the Middle East and the safety of maritime navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions in order to prevent the smuggling of additional weapons to the Houthis and to hold violators of the arms embargo accountable. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia furthermore calls for the Security Council to take urgent measures to address the stockpile of Houthi weapons and to disarm this terrorist militia in order to prevent the escalation of these attacks, which raise regional tensions and raise the risks of a broader regional confrontation.

My delegation requests that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Khaled **Almanzlawiy**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

18-07643 (E) 140518

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United Nations S/2018/449

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 May 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 9 and 10 May 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

18-07738 (E) 140518 160518

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Annex to the letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (9 May 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire: three in Ladhiqiyah Governorate and one in Aleppo Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported two incidents of gunfire in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation in Hazzah, Damascus Governorate: 445 food parcels were distributed. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered was 1.9 tons.

In total, 1,804 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,556.66 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 113 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 80,011 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is unchanged — it is still 2,509.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (10 May 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire: two in Aleppo Governorate and two in Ladhiqiyah Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported two incidents of gunfire in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

The passage of a United Nations assessment mission was assured to Dayr al-Zawr in Dayr al-Zawr Governorate.

In total, 1,804 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,556.66 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 23 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 80,034 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is unchanged — it is still 2,509.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/450

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 May 2018

Original: English

Identical letters dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to inform you, once again, of ominous developments that continue to plague our region.

I wish to draw your attention to the strengthening of ties between two internationally recognized terrorist organizations, Hamas and Hizbullah, the Iranian proxy. As I informed you in my letter dated 27 June 2017, Hamas has been colluding with Hizbullah and its sponsor in Tehran to expand its malicious activities beyond Gaza, Judea and Samaria to areas within Lebanon.

The increasing cooperation between Hamas, Hizbullah and Iran constitutes a major threat not only to Israel, but also to the stability and security of the entire region.

Some of this cooperation has been publicized in pre-announced meetings of high-ranking operatives and statements of mutual support. It is led by Saleh al-Arouri, the Lebanon-based deputy head of the Politburo of Hamas, and Saeed Izadi, the head of the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Al Quds Force, both of whom have made no attempt to conceal the growing coordination between Iran, Hizbullah and Hamas. Furthermore, Iran has publicly declared its commitment to increasing its support for Hamas. Iranian military leader Qassem Soleimani has even gone so far as to say that all of his country's means and resources are at the disposal of Hamas, without precondition, to be used for aggression against Israel.

In addition to the publicly known relationship, Hamas has been building its own military force covertly in Lebanon. Hamas has recruited and trained hundreds of fighters, mostly men of Palestinian origin, and plans to recruit thousands more, who will operate as a force on behalf of Hamas in Lebanon. At the direction of Hamas operative Majid Hader, Hamas has assembled infrastructure in Lebanon ready to manufacture its own missiles and unmanned aircraft to add to its war arsenal and increase its offensive capabilities.

The goal of the activities of Hamas, both overt and covert, is not just to gain an additional front from which Hamas could launch terrorist attacks against the innocent civilians of Israel. Hamas also intends to use its armed force and growing arsenal of rockets to pull Lebanon into a conflict with Israel. This intention increases the possibility of a conflict that could engulf the entire Middle East.

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Despite the fact that multiple media outlets have exposed key elements of Hamas covert activities in recent months, the State of Lebanon has done nothing to combat this additional terrorist entity operating in its territory.

Not only is the Lebanese Government neglecting to fulfil its obligations under Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004), it is also in flagrant violation of them, legitimizing the activities of Hamas and Hizbullah as a result. In the light of these developments, the United Nations must remain vigilant to ensure the safety of our region and ensure that all the relevant Security Council resolutions are strictly enforced.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/451

Security Council

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Implementation of resolution 2357 (2017)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The illicit flow of arms and related materiel into or out of Libya continues to be of regional and international concern. Recognizing this threat to international peace and security, the Security Council has adopted measures, in particular the sanctions regime under resolution 1970 (2011), which imposes an arms embargo on Libya, to address the situation. Against this backdrop, the Council authorized, in its resolution 2292 (2016), the inspection by Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, with appropriate consultations with the Government of National Accord, on the high seas off the coast of Libya, of vessels bound for or from Libya for which there are reasonable grounds to believe that they are carrying arms or related materiel. Under the resolution, Member States that are conducting such inspections, acting nationally or through regional organizations, are also authorized, upon discovery of prohibited items, to seize and dispose of the items and to collect evidence directly related to the carriage of such items during such inspections.[1]

2. In renewing the authorizations contained in resolution 2292 (2016) for a further 12 months, the Security Council, in its resolution 2357 (2017), also requested the Secretary-General to provide a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report, submitted in fulfilment of that request, was informed by consultations with and input received from Member States, regional organizations, the Panel of Experts on Libya and the United Nations system, including the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

3. The authorizations provided by the Security Council for inspections on the high seas off the coast of Libya constitute an important part of its ongoing efforts to reinforce the implementation of its arms embargo adopted through resolution 1970 (2011). Since 2011, the Council has maintained a two-way arms embargo on Libya to prevent the proliferation of arms in the region, contribute to the prevention of violence against civilians in the country, support the Libyan political transition and assist the Government of National Accord in establishing unified national forces that could ensure security and defend Libya against terrorism. The arms embargo is itself an essential component of the Council's sanctions regime relating to Libya, which also

[1] For the first reference by the Security Council to inspections on the high seas in relation to Libya, see paragraph 13 of resolution 1973 (2011). For reference to the termination of this provision, see paragraph 8 of resolution 2040 (2012).

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includes a travel ban, an asset freeze and measures aimed at preventing the illicit export of petroleum, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, from Libya. The Council has adapted the exceptions to and the exemptions provisions of the arms embargo during the past seven years in response to developments in Libya.[2]

4. In order to facilitate the implementation of the arms embargo, prior to its adoption of resolution 2292 (2016), the Security Council, in paragraph 11 of its resolution 1970 (2011), had already called upon Member States to conduct inspections of cargo in their territories that was heading to and coming from Libya. That included inspections at airports and seaports, if the Member State had information that provided reasonable grounds to believe that the cargo contained prohibited items. The Council also authorized the seizure and disposal of any prohibited items that had been discovered during the inspections. In 2014 and 2015, in paragraph 9 of resolution 2174 (2014) and in paragraph 19 of resolution 2213 (2015), the Council again called upon Member States to conduct such inspections in their territories.

5. Moreover, and outside the scope of the arms embargo but still pertaining to Libya, the Security Council also mandated the inspection on the high seas of vessels in other circumstances. Through resolution 2362 (2017), for example, an inspection regime was authorized to prevent illicit exports of petroleum from Libya and, until 15 November 2018, the inspection was also authorized on the high seas of vessels designated by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. As another example, resolution 2380 (2017) was aimed at combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, and until 5 October 2018, inspection was authorized of vessels suspected of being used for such acts on the high seas off the coast of Libya (see S/2016/766 and S/2017/761 for reports of the Secretary-General submitted in this regard).

6. The arms embargo and the subsequent inspection regime on the high seas are strong reflections of the Security Council's resolve to address the smuggling of arms to and from Libya that has occurred since 2011. Member States, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya,[3]

[2] For more information, including on existing exceptions and exemptions and on the reporting of attempted or actual violations of the embargo, see Implementation Assistance Notice No. 2 of 11 September 2014 and No. 3 of 18 August 2016 issued by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, available from www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1970/implementation-assistance.

[3] In 2012, the Committee reported to the Security Council that it had initiated inquiries into reports of alleged proliferation of weapons by sea from Libya (S/2012/983). Two Member States reported to the Committee, in 2013 and 2014, on their discovery of illicit arms and related materiel destined for Libya following the inspection of cargo, at their respective seaports or inside their territorial waters, on board three vessels (see S/PV.6981 and S/2014/909 and S/2014/106 and S/2015/128). The most recent such case concerned a fourth vessel, which was inspected in January 2018 (see S/PV.8211).

regional organizations[4] and the Panel of Experts[5] have all reported on illicit transfers of arms and related materiel to and from Libya. Those transfers have involved State and non-State actors, including foreign and Libyan armed groups, and criminal entities. In addition, the illicit flow of arms from Libya has enabled terrorist groups to expand their influence in the region.[6]

II. Implementation of the authorizations set out in resolution 2292 (2016) and extended in resolution 2357 (2017)

7. The European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA) has been the only regional arrangement acting under the above-mentioned authorizations. Since June 2016, through the operation, more than 1,200 hailings, more than 70 friendly approaches and three vessel inspections have been conducted, leading to two seizures of prohibited items. Since June 2017, there have been no reports of the military operation detecting arms smuggling activity in international waters.

8. In a letter dated 9 April 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat, the Government of National Accord informed the Secretariat that it was cooperating with the military operation to monitor and respond to potential violations of the arms embargo. It also expressed its firm commitment to maintaining security and stability in Libya and the region and stated that, in the sensitive circumstances, it supported a further extension of the above-mentioned authorizations.

9. No further information has been brought to the attention of the Secretariat regarding additional inspections of vessels or seizures of cargo by Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, on the high seas off the coast of Libya. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has informed the Secretariat that, since July 2017, it has agreed to support, if needed and as necessary, the efforts of the European Union to implement Security Council resolution 2357 (2017) within the framework of Operation Sea Guardian of NATO.

Inspections: *Med Prodigy* and *El Mukhtar*

10. Providing input for the present report, the military operation informed the Secretariat that it had conducted three vessel inspections pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 of Security Council resolution 2292 (2016). On 14 September 2016, it inspected the *Med Prodigy*, which was apparently bound for Misratah. The military operation reported that good-faith efforts had been made to first obtain the consent of the flag

[4] The European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean discovered illicit arms and related materiel on the high seas off the coast of Libya in May and June 2017. According to that military operation, while a marginal intra-theatre arms transfer is believed to have occurred in Libyan territorial waters, there is little evidence to suggest any inter-theatre transfers since its most recent inspection, in June 2017. The Panel of Experts has advised, however, that there is a possibility of arms being smuggled into Libya through the use of sea routes that avoid international waters altogether.

[5] Since its establishment in 2011, the Panel of Experts has reported on arms smuggling activity by sea among Libya, neighbouring countries, Europe and the Middle East, fuelling regional conflicts, insecurity and terrorism. In its most recent report (S/2017/466), the Panel drew attention to the transfer by sea, in April 2016, of armoured vehicles to Libya that had not been intended for the Government of National Accord and hence not falling under the exception to the arms embargo. The Panel also pointed to transfers by sea, in January and April 2017, respectively, of other vehicles that it believed could be categorized as non-lethal military equipment that had not been intended for the Government of National Accord.

[6] For more information, see S/2017/466 (para. 171; annex 44) and S/2017/573 (para. 9).

State, but no reply had been forthcoming in the specified four-hour time limit and, therefore, the inspection went ahead. The second and third inspections involved the *El Mukhtar*, which, on 1 May and 19 June 2017, was heading from Misratah to Benghazi. On both occasions, the vessel was inspected with the consent of Libya, which, at the time,[7] was believed to be the flag State. Those inspections involved multiple interactions, both formal and informal, with points of contact in the Libyan coastguard. According to the military operation, the crews of both vessels were cooperative during the inspections. Whereas no arms or related materiel were found aboard the *Med Prodigy*, items prohibited under the arms embargo were seized during the inspections of the *El Mukhtar*.

11. In addition, five friendly approaches were conducted between November 2016 and March 2017 in relation to the Libyan-flagged fishing vessel *Lufy*, travelling between Misratah and Benghazi. The military operation determined that the vessel enjoyed sovereign immunity under international law because it was chartered by forces under the control of the Government of National Accord for humanitarian purposes, namely the transport of wounded fighters, with arms present on board for self-defence.

Seizure and disposal of prohibited items and collection of evidence

12. In accordance with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 2292 (2016), the military operation reported that, following the first inspection of the *El Mukhtar*, the seized items were transferred to the *FGS Rhein*, a German naval vessel that was part of the military operation that had conducted the inspection. Two arms-related items, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and a rocket-propelled grenade, were immediately destroyed by the *FGS Rhein* for security reasons. The remaining items (arms, ammunition and explosives) were later stored in a naval warehouse in Cava di Sorciano, Italy, on 5 June 2017. The Panel of Experts inspected the stored items in September 2017 and is expected to reflect on its findings in its next report.

13. Following the second inspection of the *El Mukhtar*, the seized arms and ammunition were immediately destroyed for security reasons by the *FS Commandant Blaison*, a French naval vessel operating under the operation. The Panel of Experts informed the Secretariat that it had been unable to inspect the items and that the list of the items provided to the Panel was not sufficiently detailed to facilitate its investigations into the origin of the items.

Reporting obligations and sharing of relevant information

14. Under the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 2292 (2016), Member States and the Government of National Accord were encouraged to share relevant information with the Committee and with those Member States and regional organizations acting under the authorizations set out in resolution 2292 (2016). In that regard, in addition to having submitted reports to the Committee on the two vessels inspected pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 2292 (2016), the military operation also briefed the members of the Council on its activities in an informal interactive dialogue held on 31 May 2017. The military operation also informed the Secretariat that it had continued to gather information through the issuance of requests for information to States members of the European Union and various entities. In addition, the Panel of Experts informed the Secretariat that it had been in communication with the Office of the Commander of the operation.

[7] It was later discovered that the *El Mukhtar* had been flying the flag of another Member State, a matter currently under investigation by that Member State.

III. Observations

15. I commend the efforts of the military operation to deter the smuggling of illicit arms and related materiel to or from Libya by sea. I also welcome the cooperation extended to it by the Government of National Accord, with a view to implementing the arms embargo. I encourage the Government of National Accord to further explore measures to strengthen the point-of-contact system in the Libyan coastguard.

16. In connection with the authorization to inspect suspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya, I should like to recall the stipulations contained in Security Council resolution 2292 (2016) relating to, inter alia, making good-faith efforts to first obtain the consent of the vessel's flag State, acting in full compliance with international law and international human rights law, as applicable, doing so without causing undue delay or interference with the exercise of freedom of navigation and avoiding causing harm to the maritime environment or the safety of navigation.

17. In order to complement the efforts of the military operation, I also encourage Member States, in their territorial waters or at their seaports, to inspect cargo to and from Libya, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. Those endeavours should also be complemented by the provision of support for training and capacity-building needs, as identified by the Government of National Accord for its coastguard and its port and customs authorities.

18. In the seven years since the Security Council imposed the arms embargo in relation to Libya, implementation continues to encounter challenges. I echo the calls made by members of the Council to fully implement the embargo measures, which remain of critical importance to the protection of civilians and the restoration of security and stability in Libya and the region. In that connection, it would be important to deepen knowledge, reporting and data collection on arms trafficking routes, patterns and the profiling of traffickers off the coast of Libya, which is essential to better understanding the full extent of illicit trafficking in the region and its links to terrorism. To that end, while there may be legitimate considerations for the immediate disposal of items seized during an inspection, it is important that detailed records of seized items be maintained and that the Panel of Experts be afforded the opportunity to have access to those records. Whether an inspection is undertaken on the high seas off the coast of Libya or inside territorial waters, I also encourage Member States that discover prohibited items to invite the Panel to inspect, document and analyse the items before any destruction thereof. For its part, the Panel may wish to inform its interlocutors of the type of information that it requires in order to advance its investigations into potential violations of the embargo.

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you once again, for the seventh week in a row, as unarmed, defenceless Palestinian civilian peaceful protesters participating in the "Great March of Return" in the Gaza Strip and throughout the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continue to be targeted and brutally shot dead by Israeli occupying forces. It is clear that, absent serious measures of accountability, Israel, the occupying Power, will continue, as it has over the past six weeks, to kill and injure Palestinian civilians with complete impunity. The international community must no longer remain silent in the face of such blatant crimes committed by the occupying Power against the unprotected and defenceless Palestinian population that it holds hostage under its 50-year occupation.

As of the writing of the present letter, the Israeli occupying forces have today killed one more Palestinian civilian, Jabr Salem Abu Moustafa, age 40, and injured more than 730. Moreover, on 3 May, Anas Shawqi Abu Aser, age 19, succumbed to critical injuries that he had sustained in east Gaza City on 27 April at the hands of Israeli occupying forces. Moreover, on 7 May, Israeli forces killed Bahaa Abdel Rahman Qadih, age 23, and Mohammed Khaled Abu Rida, age 20, in east Khuza'ah town, located in east Khan Yunis city.

The latest casualties bring the total number of Palestinians who were killed for daring to raise their voices to protest Israel's systematic violation of their human rights, as well as to demand an end to occupation, siege and dispossession, and to call for independence, freedom and return to their ancestral lands since the six-week Great March of Return began on 30 March, to at least 45, including children and journalists. It should be noted that the majority of those killed were refugees whose families had been displaced from their homes and lands during Israel's ethnic cleansing campaign in the 1948 Nakbah.

Moreover, the number of Palestinians wounded and injured throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the protests began has now surpassed more than

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6,800. Of those injured, more than 1,900 had been shot with live ammunition and many are in serious or critical condition. The injuries sustained by protesters have been horrific, likely to leave many of them with permanent disabilities, according to doctors at the European and Shifa hospitals in Gaza City. The director of the emergency department at Al-Shifa, Gaza's largest hospital, stated that most of the casualties had been wounded by live ammunition, mostly shot in the lower limbs, crushing large parts of the bones, cutting into veins, nerves and muscles, and losing skin in the injured area. At least 28 Palestinian civilian protesters have lost limbs as a result of Israeli sniper fire.

The mass influx of casualties, compounded by more than a decade of Israel's illegally imposed blockade and the targeting of paramedics and ambulances by Israel, the occupying Power, have left essential health services in Gaza barely able to function. Since 30 March, there have been nearly 5,000 hospitalized injuries, with an additional 4,255 treated in field medical trauma stabilization points. Here, we also appeal to all States to continue their vital humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, especially during the medical emergency in Gaza, where the health sector is coping with the mass influx of casualties, and to increase their support, if possible, to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which, beyond humanitarian aid, stands for hope and respect for rights and dignity, so crucial in the absence of a solution and amid growing despair and uncertainty about the future.

Against this backdrop of criminal activity in Gaza, Israel, the occupying Power, has also continued to persist in its deliberate, systematic and gross violations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This includes the continuation of its colonial settlement enterprise, implemented through, inter alia, the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures, the confiscation of Palestinian land, the forcible transfer of Palestinian families and communities, the construction of settlements and transfer of its citizens thereto, the encouragement and condoning of settler violence and terror, and the fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory through segregated roads, checkpoints and the illegal Wall.

In this regard, Israel recently published new military orders and decisions to facilitate settlement activity on Palestinian land. The Bedouin community in Khan al-Ahmar has been threatened with forcible transfer to the "Ayn Shams" area, near Abu Dis, in order to make way for the expansion of settlements. The so-called Zandberg Committee has proposed to "legitimize" thousands of settlement units built on private Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank. Israel is also working to rehabilitate a wide road network linking the settlements in the West Bank with occupied Jerusalem in an attempt to consolidate the annexation of the "Ma'ale Adummim" settlement bloc in the West Bank. Israeli forces have bulldozed scores of dunums of Palestinian land to make way for the expansion of settlements, including agricultural land in Asirah al-Qibliyah village, south of Nablus, in order to expand the settlement "outpost" affiliated with the Yitzkhar settlement, and lands planted with olive and forest trees in the town of Kafr al-Dik, in Salfit, with a view to expanding the "Ata Zahav" settlement.

Heinous crimes by Israeli settler terrorists also continue unabated. Only this morning at dawn, a group of Israeli settler terrorists set ablaze the home of the Dawabsheh family in the village of Duma, in the West Bank, breaking a window and throwing a Molotov cocktail inside before fleeing the scene. The eldest son, Ahmed, only 6 years old, was severely injured, with burns all over his body. In July 2015, the same Ahmed suffered severe burns after Israeli terrorist settlers threw firebombs into his family's home, burning alive an 18-month-old baby, Ali, as he slept in his bed and severely burning his mother and father, Reham and Sa'ad, who later died from their wounds, leaving Ahmed orphaned.

As Israeli settlers continue their rampages, terrorizing and traumatizing Palestinian families, we call again for immediate measures to hold accountable all settlers committing crimes against the Palestinian people. Impunity for Israeli settlers cannot continue to be the norm, and the international community must demand that Israel uphold its obligations to investigate all such crimes and hold the perpetrators accountable. Terrorism in all its forms must be unequivocally condemned and ceased.

Meanwhile, Israel is trying to keep the international community from witnessing its illegal practices against the Palestinian people by continuously resorting to distortions of reality through propaganda and by denying human rights organizations access to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This week, Israel decided to deport a Human Rights Watch official for reporting on human rights violations in areas under Israeli control. As expressed in a statement by 16 Israeli human rights groups this morning, in solidarity with Human Rights Watch, "Rather than trying to hide the occupation from the world — end the occupation".

In the light of Israel's ongoing premeditated killing and maiming of unarmed protesters in Gaza, we must again call upon the international community to ensure protection for the Palestinian people. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the relevant United Nations resolutions, must be upheld without exception. We urge the Security Council to act on its responsibilities in this regard and also appeal to all States to fulfil their legal obligations, including to respect and ensure respect for the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Moreover, we continue to call for an independent and transparent international mechanism in order to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice and also to avert further bloodshed among the innocent civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Moreover, the broader historical context must be addressed. The international community must ensure respect for international law by compelling Israel to bring its decades-long occupation, siege, oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people to an end. The voices of the peaceful Palestinian protesters in Gaza, as of those of peoples of conscience worldwide, must be heard and heeded for the sake of peace, security, freedom, dignity and basic humanity.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

United Nations A/72/869–S/2018/453

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Seventy-second session
Agenda item 65
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, M. Javad Zarif, regarding the unilateral and unlawful decision of the United States to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 65, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Annex to the letter dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you are aware, on 8 May 2018, the President of the United States announced his unilateral and unlawful decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in material breach of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), to which the JCPOA is annexed. Simultaneously, he signed a presidential memorandum instructing relevant US authorities "to cease the participation of the United States in the JCPOA" and "to reimpose all United States sanctions lifted or waived in connection with the JCPOA", thus committing multiple cases of "significant non-performance" with the JCPOA, and in clear non-compliance with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). These acts constitute a complete disregard for international law and the Charter of the United Nations, undermine the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, endanger multilateralism and its institutions, indicate a regress to the failed and disastrous era of unilateralism, and encourage intransigence and illegality.

Unlike the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has scrupulously fulfilled its undertakings under the JCPOA, as repeatedly and consistently verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United States has consistently failed — since "implementation day", and particularly after the assumption of office by President Trump — to abide by its commitments under the JCPOA. I have brought the most significant cases of US non-performance to the attention of the Joint Commission, inter alia, through 12 official letters to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in her capacity as Coordinator of the JCPOA Joint Commission.

In my letter of 2 September 2016, I registered Iran's complaints about US failures to perform its obligations eight months after "implementation day" by not issuing the necessary licences for the sale or lease of passenger aircraft, by hindering Iran's free access to its assets abroad, by obstructing re-engagement of the non-American banking and financial community with Iran and by the reintroduction of certain sanctions under Executive Order 13645, which was supposed to be terminated in its totality. That letter also referred to the failure of the US President to use his constitutional authority to prevent "the US Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015" from violating US obligations under the JCPOA.

In my letter of 17 November 2016, I underlined the necessity of the use of the US President's constitutional authority to prevent the coming into force of the "Iran Sanctions Extension Act", which constituted the reimposition of the sanctions lifted under the JCPOA, which is clearly prohibited by the JCPOA. The same letter underlined that "Iran has hitherto exercised enormous restraint in the face of lackluster implementation of JCPOA by some participants, in particular the United States, especially with regard to banking and financial services as well as persistent public and private harassment of Iran's business partners by various US institutions, agencies and instrumentalities."

Subsequently, in my letter of 16 December 2016, I informed the JCPOA Joint Commission that, as a result of the extension of the "Iran Sanctions Act" (ISA) on 14 December 2016, "the United States committed a significant breach of its obligations under the JCPOA by reintroducing the sanctions under ISA."

In my letter of 28 March 2017, I protested to the Joint Commission that, "Since the assumption of office by the new US administration, what used to be 'lackluster' implementation of the JCPOA by the previous administration has now turned into

total and open hostility towards the deal, threatening to render the entire bargain meaningless, unbalanced and unsustainable." The letter underlined that the Trump administration had "maliciously intended to prevent normalization of trade with Iran and to deprive Iran from the economic dividends clearly envisaged in the JCPOA, by ensuring continued — and even exacerbated — uncertainty about the future of economic relations and cooperation with Iran", inter alia, through the illegal "review process" and by "the pattern of provocative statements against the JCPOA by senior US administration officials".

In my letter of 28 May 2017, I brought several instances to the attention of the Joint Commission illustrating that, even when the United States purported to comply by renewing the required waivers, "it aimed to reverse Iran's benefit from the JCPOA ... and to 'call into question the US's long-term support for the nuclear accord' in order to increase uncertainty and dissuade engagement with Iran".

In my letter of 19 July 2017, I produced conclusive evidence which corroborated that the United States was following a systematic policy aimed at dissuading Iran's economic partners from engaging with Iran in clear contradiction of US commitments under the JCPOA, in particular paragraphs 28 and 29. In this respect, I referred to an official statement by the White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary in which she officially acknowledged through a 'public statement' that President Trump, "in his discussions with more than half a dozen foreign leaders ... underscored the need ... to stop doing business with ... Iran".

In my letter of 13 August 2017, I warned the Joint Commission that the United States was destroying the 'atmosphere' needed for the 'successful implementation' of the JCPOA in an exhibition of bad faith. Specifically, I referred to President Trump's rhetoric and his administration's distortions — in blatant violation of the letter, spirit and intent of the JCPOA — in order to allege non-compliance by Iran in spite of repeated verifications by the IAEA.

In my letter of 19 August 2017, I provided one example of how the United States sought to affect the professional work of the IAEA. While objecting to the US Permanent Representative's travel to Vienna "to discuss the US Government's concerns about the Iran nuclear deal with the International Atomic Energy Agency" and to "press IAEA on Iran deal compliance", I insisted that the publicly stated purpose of such visits raises several serious concerns over further violations of the letter and spirit of the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which could also undermine the credibility of the Agency — vital to the non-proliferation regime in general, and the JCPOA in particular.

In my letter of 18 September 2017, I informed the Joint Commission that the United States Government was manufacturing fabricated excuses either to get out of the JCPOA outright or to make it impossible and irrational for Iran to continue its good faith, patient and scrupulous adherence with the agreement. Several facts at that time were indicating that the US was concocting "decertification" of Iran's compliance, in spite of all IAEA reports and US State Department repeated admissions. I underlined in that letter that the US administration cannot hide behind such domestic procedure that it is maliciously initiating itself, and will have to bear full responsibility for the aftermath in Congress. I indicated that, "while the Islamic Republic of Iran has a clear preference for the survival and continued scrupulous implementation of the JCPOA, and while it has proven its good faith and exercised maximum restraint in the face of continued and persistent US violations and intransigence, the renowned patience of Iranian people is not limitless, and the options of the Iranian Government are not limited".

In my letter of 16 October 2017, referring to the unlawful decertification within a US domestic procedure on 13 October 2017, I underscored that the United States

was actively seeking to deprive Iran of enjoying the benefits of American sanction-lifting obligations under the JCPOA. As such, they constituted a grave breach of the very letter and substance of paragraphs 26, 28 and 29 of the JCPOA. In the same letter, I reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran will never accept illegal demands and expects other JCPOA participants to do likewise.

In my letter of 1 February 2018, I officially objected to the ultimatum by President Trump on 12 January 2018, demanding that other JCPOA participants follow him in unlawfully altering the terms of the agreement. I urged other JCPOA participants to remain cognizant of their shared responsibility to safeguard the agreement by holding the United States accountable for its reckless and unlawful actions, and refraining from any statement or action that may be interpreted as conceding or acquiescing to US attempts to alter, amend or otherwise undermine the JCPOA.

In my letter dated today, I specified measures that need to be taken through the Joint Commission to address the wrongful acts by the United States against Iran and international law, including its unlawful withdrawal from the accord and the reimposition of sanctions.

As you have seen from these correspondences, the United States had been persistently violating the terms of the agreement almost from its inception, even preventing other JCPOA participants from fully performing their obligations. Those violations included systematic failures, late, lackluster, defective, superficial and ineffective nominal implementation, undue delays, new sanctions and designations, derogatory anti-JCPOA statements by senior officials — in particular the President himself — refusal to issue any Office of Foreign Assets Control licences in the past 16 months, as well as concerted efforts by the US Government's agencies and instrumentalities to actively dissuade businesses from engagement with Iran.

The unlawful US act of unwarranted withdrawal from the JCPOA renders it responsible for the most blatant material breach of its obligations under the agreement. The US has also flagrantly violated Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which was sponsored, inter alia, by the United States itself and adopted unanimously by the Council. The United States must, therefore, be held accountable for the consequences of its reckless and wrongful act, which flies in the face of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The prolonged and multiple cases of significant non-performance by the US over the last three years — particularly in the last 16 months — its active obstruction of performance by other JCPOA participants, its bad faith nominal implementation, and its unlawful and unwarranted cessation of implementation of its commitments under the JCPOA and the official reimposition of unlawful sanctions have caused irreparable harm to Iran and its international business relations. The United States should be held responsible for these damages, and the Iranian nation must be compensated.

The JCPOA is a multi-party agreement based on reciprocity. Its scope, provisions and time frames are based on a delicate, negotiated and multilaterally accepted balance that cannot be widened, altered or renegotiated. Its benefits to the Iranian people cannot be subjected to any conditionality other than those nuclear-related voluntary measures specifically stipulated solely in the JCPOA and its annexes. Some of the most significant economic benefits to Iran from the JCPOA derive from the sanctions-lifting obligation of the United States. If the JCPOA is to survive, the remaining JCPOA participants and the international community need to fully ensure that Iran is compensated unconditionally through appropriate national, regional and global measures.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been in full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA. This fact has been repeatedly verified by the IAEA, as reflected in its Director-General's reports to the IAEA Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council since "implementation day" in January of 2016. In line with Iran's commitment to legality and the peaceful resolution of international disputes, the Islamic Republic of Iran has decided to resort to the JCPOA mechanism in good faith to find solutions in order to rectify the United States' multiple cases of significant non-performance and its unlawful withdrawal, and to determine whether and how the remaining JCPOA participants and other economic partners can ensure the full benefits that the Iranian people are entitled to derive from this global diplomatic achievement. If, after the exhaustion of available remedies, our people's rights and benefits are not fully compensated, it is Iran's unquestionable right — recognized also under the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) — to take appropriate action in response to persistent, numerous unlawful acts by the US, particularly its withdrawal and reimposition of all sanctions.

I urge the United Nations to keep the United States accountable for its unilateral and irresponsible conduct, which will detrimentally affect the rule of law, multilateralism and the very foundations of diplomacy.

(*Signed*) M. Javad **Zarif**

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Security Council

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16 May 2018

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Letter dated 14 May 2018 from the representatives of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru and Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We, the undersigned members of the Security Council, are writing to express our profound concern about the lack of implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which was adopted by the Security Council on 23 December 2016.

The Council reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace (resolution 2334 (2016), para. 1). It also reiterated the demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard (ibid., para. 2). In a report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) presented on 18 December 2017, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Nickolay Mladenov, reported that no such steps had been taken during the reporting period.

The Special Coordinator also reported that there was continuing violence against civilians, including terrorist attacks, during the reporting period, as well as inflammatory rhetoric and provocations, despite the fact that, in resolution 2334 (2016), the Council called upon both parties to take immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. The Special Coordinator concluded that the reporting period had not seen significant positive moves towards advancing peace. It is clear that continuing violence against civilians and incitement perpetuate mutual fear and suspicion and must be condemned, as such acts impede any efforts to bridge the gaps between Israelis and Palestinians and empower extremists.

All settlements and continued settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, contravene resolution 2334 (2016) and undermine the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution. The Secretary-General has been clear that ending the occupation and realizing a two-State solution, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine, is the only way to achieve such a vision. A political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has lasted for too long, is needed. As the Secretary-General stated in his remarks to the Security Council on 20 February 2018, this means addressing all final status issues on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and mutual agreements. As the Secretary-General stated, there is no plan B.

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As Member States of the United Nations, we must all be dedicated to implementing Security Council resolutions, as provided for in article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council must stand behind its resolutions and ensure that they have meaning; otherwise, we risk undermining the credibility of the international system. In paragraph 11 of resolution 2334 (2016), the Council reaffirmed its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions. With this in mind, we would like to make a proposal to further the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), as follows.

In paragraph 12 of resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the provisions of the resolution). This has to date been in the form of an oral report. The standard practice is, however, that the Council receives written reports. While there may sometimes be legitimate reasons for oral reports, they should be reserved for exceptional circumstances. We therefore request the Secretary-General to circulate a written report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) to the Council prior to relevant meetings of the Council.

We kindly request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Verónica **Cordova Soria**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

(*Signed*) **Ma** Zhaoxu
Ambassador
China

(*Signed*) Alcide Ilahiri **Djedje**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Côte d'Ivoire

(*Signed*) Anatolio **Ndong Mba**
Ambassador
Equatorial Guinea

(*Signed*) François **Delattre**
Ambassador
France

(*Signed*) Karel **van Oosterom**
Ambassador
Netherlands

(*Signed*) Gustavo **Meza-Cuadra**
Ambassador
Peru

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Ambassador
Kazakhstan

(*Signed*) Mansour **Alotaibi**
Ambassador
Kuwait

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**
Ambassador
Sweden

United Nations S/2018/455

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 May 2018

Original: English

United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and its presidential statements on the situation in Sudan and South Sudan, and in particular, resolutions 1990 (2011), 2024 (2011), 2032 (2011), 2046 (2012), 2047 (2012), 2075 (2012), 2104 (2013), 2126 (2013), 2156 (2014), 2179 (2014), 2205 (2015), 2230 (2015), 2251 (2015), 2287 (2016), 2318 (2016), 2352 (2017), 2386 (2017), 2411 (2018), and 2412 (2018) as well as presidential statements S/PRST/2012/19 and S/PRST/2013/14, and the Council's press statements of 18 June 2012, 21 September 2012, 28 September 2012, 6 May 2013, 14 June 2013, 14 February 2014, 17 March 2014, 11 December 2014, and 27 November 2015,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan and South Sudan, and to the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and recalling the importance of the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference and regional cooperation,

Reiterating that the territorial boundaries of States shall not be altered by force, and that any territorial disputes shall be settled exclusively by peaceful means, *affirming* the priority it attaches to the full and urgent implementation of all outstanding issues from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and *underscoring* that the future status of Abyei shall be resolved by negotiations between the parties in a manner consistent with the CPA and not by the unilateral actions of either party,

Underscoring that continued cooperation between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and Government of the Republic of South Sudan is critical for peace, security and stability and the future relations between them, *encouraging* progress on improving bilateral relations and holding regular meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) and other joint mechanisms, and *calling on* both governments to implement their commitments in the 20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, the 29 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), the 30 July 2011 Agreement on the Border Monitoring Support Mission between the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, the 27 September 2012 Agreements on Cooperation and Security Arrangements, and all subsequent decisions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM),

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Please recycle

Commending the continued assistance provided to the parties by the African Union (AU), the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan and South Sudan, and United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA),

Acknowledging that over the course of the seven years since establishment of UNISFA, the mission has been able to stabilize and demilitarize the Abyei Area and that UNISFA is now an interim security force with no viable exit strategy, and in this regard, *taking note* of the need to reconfigure the mission in order to create the space for a viable political process that would also serve as an exit strategy,

Taking note of the security situation in the Abyei Area as characterized by the 3 April 2018 Secretary-General's report (S/2018/293), *commending* the UN Police for activities to advise and mentor the local population in absence of the Abyei Police Service, *urging* both parties to urgently establish the Abyei Police Service, *welcoming* UNISFA's enhanced role in fostering intercommunal dialogue, and *urging* all parties to continue these dialogue,

Commending the efforts of UNISFA in effectively carrying out its mandate, including by its ongoing facilitation of peaceful migration throughout the Abyei Area, conflict prevention, mediation and deterrence, and *strongly underscoring* the unacceptability of any attack on United Nations personnel, and *reiterating* that such attacks, which may constitute a war crime, should be swiftly and thoroughly investigated, and that those responsible should be held to account,

Bearing in mind the current humanitarian situation in which humanitarian actors continue to provide assistance to 170,000 people in the Abyei Area,

Recalling resolution 2378 (2017) and its request of the Secretary-General to ensure that data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including peacekeeping performance data, is used to improve analytics and the evaluation of mission operations, based on clear and well identified benchmarks,

Further recalling resolutions 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security and emphasizing that persistent barriers to full implementation of these resolutions will only be dismantled through dedicated commitment to women's empowerment, participation, and human rights, and through concerted leadership, consistent information and action, and support, to build women's engagement in all levels of decision-making, also recalling resolution 2242 and its aspiration to increase the number of women in military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations,

Expressing concern about the residual threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war in the Abyei Area, which hinders the safe return of displaced persons to their homes, safe migration, and livelihood activities,

Recalling that the Security Council welcomed in resolution 2205 (2015) the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian head of mission,

Recognizing that the current situation in Abyei and along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan continues to constitute a serious threat to international peace and security,

1. *Decides* to extend until 15 November 2018 the mandate of UNISFA as set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 1990 (2011) and acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, *further decides* to extend until 15 November 2018 the tasks of UNISFA as set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 1990 (2011);

2. *Recalls* its decision in resolution 2412 (2018) to extend until 15 October 2018 UNISFA's mandate modification set forth in resolution 2024 (2011) and paragraph 1 of resolution 2075 (2012), *further recalls* its decision in resolution 2412 (2018) that such extension shall be the final extension of support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) unless both parties demonstrate measurable progress as outlined in paragraph 3 of resolution 2412 (2018), and *calls on* the parties to take those steps;

3. *Decides* to reduce the authorized troop ceiling to 4,500 until 15 November 2018, and further decides that as of 15 October 2018, the authorized troop ceiling shall decrease to 3,959, unless it decides to extend the mandate modification set forth in resolution 2024 (2011) and paragraph 1 of resolution 2075 (2012), in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 2412 (2018);

4. *Recalls* the police ceiling established in resolution 1990 (2011) and *requests* the United Nations to immediately deploy additional United Nations police in order to meet the authorized police ceiling of 50, and *demands* that the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan provide full support to UNISFA in the deployment of these personnel, including by promptly issuing visas;

5. *Expresses its intention* to revise the configuration and mandate of UNISFA in light of recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's 22 April 2018 letter and in this regard, *requests* the Secretary-General report to it, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders in particular the Governments of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, as outlined in paragraph 33 below;

6. *Expresses* disappointment that the parties have taken few steps to implement the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of Abyei Area and to achieve a political resolution to the status of Abyei, and *requests* the parties update the AUHIP on the steps outlined below and invites the AUHIP to update it by 15 October 2018 on the steps taken towards the following:

1. Resolution of the final status of Abyei to include steps towards considering the 2012 proposal made by AUHIP, noting, in particular the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) Communiques of 26 October 2013 and 6 February 2018,

2. Implementation of all Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) decisions, resolution of the allocation of positions as referred to the two Presidents, including delegation of sufficient authority to the AJOC chairs and other officials to make additional decisions and personnel appointments necessary to make, progress toward the establishment of the Abyei Area interim institutions, in accordance with the Agreement on Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area of June 2011,

3. Steps to promote reconciliation and engagement of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities on the findings and recommendations of the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee;

7. *Urges* continued progress toward the establishment of the Abyei Area interim institutions, in accordance with the Agreement on Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area of June 2011, *takes note*, in particular, that in the absence of an Abyei Police Service, UNISFA continues to be the only entity to provide policing services in response to matters of law and order, *further takes note* of the mapping exercise from 30 November 2017 to 2 February 2018 by UN Police in conjunction with UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and traditional leaders of both communities for the eventual establishment of an Abyei Police Service, and *urges* the two governments to appoint the relevant officials to participate in, along

with UNISFA, a joint integrated planning exercise and development of a roadmap towards establishment of the Abyei Police Service, by 15 October 2018;

8. *Encourages* the AUHIP and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to continue coordinating efforts towards calling for full implementation of the 2011 agreements;

9. *Welcomes* renewed efforts to determine conclusively the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) centreline on the ground, and *reiterates* that the centreline of the SDBZ in no way prejudices the current or future legal status of the border, ongoing negotiations on the disputed and claimed areas, and demarcation of the borders;

10. *Underscores* that UNISFA's protection of civilians mandate as set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 1990 (2011) includes taking the necessary actions to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, and commending UNISFA's efforts in that regard;

11. *Condemns* the intermittent presence of South Sudan security service personnel and the deployment of Diffra Oil Police units in the Abyei Area, in violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, as well as any entry of armed militias into the territory, and *reiterates* its demands that immediately and without preconditions the Government of the Republic of South Sudan fully redeploy its security service personnel from the Abyei Area and that the Government of the Republic of the Sudan redeploy the Oil Police in Diffra from the Abyei Area, and *further reiterates*, in accordance with relevant resolutions, in particular resolution 1990 (2011) and resolution 2046 (2012), that the Abyei Area shall be demilitarized from any forces, as well as armed elements of the local communities, other than UNISFA and the Abyei Police Service;

12. *Urges* the two governments to take all necessary steps to ensure that Abyei is effectively demilitarized, including through disarmament programs as necessary;

13. *Reaffirms* that UNISFA may undertake weapons confiscation and destruction in the Abyei Area as authorized under resolution 1990 (2011), consistent with its mandate and within its existing capabilities, in coordination with the signatories of the June 2011 Agreement on the Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, the AJOC, and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities and consistent with the previous AJOC decision to establish the Area as a "weapons free area";

14. *Requests* UNISFA to continue its dialogue with the AJOC and with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities on effective strategies and oversight mechanisms for ensuring full compliance by all relevant parties with Abyei's status as a weapons-free area, and *calls upon* the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, the AJOC, and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to extend full cooperation to UNISFA in this regard;

15. *Welcomes* UNISFA initiatives, to support community dialogue and efforts by the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, such as peace committees, to strengthen inter-communal relationships and facilitate stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area;

16. *Urges* the two Governments immediately to take steps to implement confidence-building measures among the respective communities in the Abyei Area, ensuring women are involved at all stages, including through reconciliation processes at the grass-roots level as well as through support for the ongoing efforts of non-governmental organizations engaging in peacebuilding, and by fully supporting UNISFA's efforts in promoting community dialogue;

17. *Underscores* that women's participation at all levels of inter-community dialogue is critical to ensure a credible, and legitimate process and *calls upon* all parties to promote full and equal participation of women;

18. *Welcomes* UNISFA's continued efforts, within existing capabilities and resources, and in close coordination with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, to strengthen the capacities of Community Protection Committees in order to assist with management of law and order processes in Abyei, while ensuring the humane and dignified treatment of suspects and other detainees, and to continue engaging with both governments on this issue;

19. *Welcomes* the 14 November 2017 meeting of traditional leaders of Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities, *calls upon* all parties to cooperate fully with the findings and recommendations following the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee's investigation into the killing of a UNISFA peacekeeper and the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief, *welcomes* the 24 March 2015 AUPSC press statement requesting the AU Commission to engage the parties on the findings and recommendations, and looks forward to the release of the African Union Commission's report on the killing of the Ngok Dinka chief, as agreed to by the traditional leaders, and for the report to be used as a basis for reconciliation between the communities, bearing in mind the need to promote stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area;

20. *Calls upon* all Member States, in particular Sudan and South Sudan, to ensure the free, unhindered and expeditious movement, to and from Abyei and throughout the SDBZ, of all personnel, as well as equipment, provisions, supplies and other goods, including vehicles, aircraft, and spare parts, which are for the exclusive and official use of UNISFA;

21. *Renews* its call upon the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to provide full support to the United Nations, including by promptly issuing visas to military, police and civilian United Nations personnel, including humanitarian personnel, without prejudice to their nationality, for entry into Sudan and South Sudan, facilitating basing arrangements, infrastructure construction, including the Athony airport, in the Mission Area and flight clearances, and providing logistical support, *calls upon* the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to facilitate travel from within Sudan and South Sudan to and from Abyei, and *further calls upon* all parties to fully adhere to their obligations under the Status of Forces Agreements;

22. *Recognizes* that the absence of development projects and the inability to deliver basic government services has had an adverse effect on Abyei populations and *calls upon* the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, as well as donors to support road maintenance, general reconstruction, and capacity-building;

23. *Demands* that the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan continue to facilitate the deployment of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to ensure freedom of movement, as well as the identification and clearance of mines in the Abyei Area and SDBZ;

24. *Further demands* that all parties involved allow all humanitarian personnel full, safe and unhindered access to civilians in need of assistance and all necessary facilities for their operations, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance;

25. *Strongly urges* that all parties cease all forms of violence, human rights violations and abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, and, in particular violations and abuses of applicable international law committed against women and children;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that effective human rights monitoring is carried out, including of any sexual and gender-based violence and

violations and abuses of human rights committed against women and children and *reiterates* its call upon the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to extend their full cooperation to the Secretary-General to this end, including by issuing visas to the concerned United Nations personnel;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek to increase the number of women in UNISFA, as well as to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations;

28. *Requests* UNISFA to make rapid progress on deploying a Women and Child Protection Advisor;

29. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary General to standardize a culture of performance in UN peacekeeping, and *calls on* him to continue his efforts to develop an integrated performance policy framework and apply it to UNISFA;

30. *Recalls* its Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/22 and its resolution 2272 (2016) and *requests* the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to ensure full compliance of UNISFA with the United Nations zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to ensure that all personnel of the mission are vetted for history of sexual misconduct in the service with the United Nations and to keep it informed through his reports about UNISFA's progress in this regard, and *urges* troop and police-contributing countries to take appropriate preventative action including pre-deployment awareness training, and to promote full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

31. *Notes* the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure close cooperation among United Nations missions in the region, including UNISFA, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as his Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, and requests that he continue this practice;

Reporting

32. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to inform it of progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate, in one written report, no later than 15 October 2018 and include reporting on:

- the movement of weapons into Abyei and the presence, destruction and confiscation of weapons within Abyei per paragraph 13,
- the steps that have been taken in line with paragraph 29,
- results of human rights monitoring as requested in paragraph 26, including information, analysis, and data on violations and abuses of human rights,
- steps which the parties have taken per paragraphs 6 and 7;

33. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report no later than 15 August 2018 on detailed recommendations on the reconfiguration of the UNISFA mandate in order to create the space for a viable political process that would also serve as an exit strategy, including the role of the UN Country Teams in support of rule of law and peacebuilding, and detailed information on steps the governments should take to create the conditions for an exit strategy, and in this regard, *welcomes* the Secretary-General's initiative to undertake a military and police capability study, to include realigning military troops and associated equipment to match the security situation in Abyei, and *further expresses* its intention to continue reviewing as appropriate the mandate of UNISFA for reconfiguration based on the Secretary-General's recommendations;

34. *Decides* to remain actively seized of this matter.

United Nations S/2018/456

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 May 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith an information bulletin dated 11 May 2018 from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 11 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (11 May 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire: two in Ladhiqiyah Governorate and two in Aleppo Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported one incident of gunfire in Dar'a Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 1,804 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,556.66 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 25 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 80,059 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is unchanged — it is still 2,509.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/457

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 May 2018

Original: English

Identical letters dated 13 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to alert you to the impending riots that the State of Israel is preparing to face this week at the security fence with the Gaza Strip. During these protests, expected to escalate in light of the Palestinian "Nakba Day", Hamas, the internationally recognized terrorist organization, plans to exploit innocent Palestinian children as human shields and place them directly in harm's way.

For over a month, the Palestinian leadership has insisted that its demonstrations at the fence are peaceful. As we have seen repeatedly, however, these riots have centred on violence and placed innocent people, both Israeli and Palestinian, in grave danger. Protesters have sent flaming kites over the fence, spreading forest fires across Israel's southern agricultural land. They have released burned tyres into the fence, thrown Molotov cocktails, planted explosive devices and even attempted to forcibly breach the fence and infiltrate Israeli territory. Twice, extremely violent Palestinian rioters have broken into and penetrated the Palestinian side of Kerem Shalom crossing, causing major and destructive damage to the fuel terminal and conveyer, thus hurting the sole lifeline into the Gaza Strip.

As the violence persists, just as Hamas intends, the terrorists continue to hide behind the innocent children of Gaza to ensure their own survival, even dressing them as armed soldiers and inciting them to violence. As Hamas commits grave violations of international law, Israel's military is taking all possible measures to protect the civilians that Hamas sends intentionally into harm's way. As these persisting riots pose a direct threat to our citizens and communities, Israel will continue to take all necessary steps to ensure their safety and security.

I call on the Security Council to condemn Hamas's use of civilians and children as human shields.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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United Nations A/ES-10/781–S/2018/458

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 14 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to bring to your urgent and immediate attention the horrific situation unfolding on the ground in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, due to the escalation of Israel's illegal actions, including targeted attacks against the Palestinian civilian population, and the mounting casualties and tensions.

In particular, the occupying Power continues to intensify its military attacks against the civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The level of death and injury inflicted on Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces in the Gaza Strip has surpassed merely immoral, inhumane and unlawful behaviour to constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, for which Israel must be fully held accountable.

The international community must no longer allow such carnage to be perpetrated against our people with impunity; our repeated pleas for international protection for the defenceless Palestinian people must no longer be ignored. Our people are defenceless and in desperate and urgent need of international protection and the protection of international law, which is being grossly, egregiously and systematically violated by the occupying Power.

As we write this letter, more than 38 Palestinian civilians, including at least six children, have been killed today by the Israeli occupying forces, and more than 2,000 civilians have been injured, many of them critically wounded by the barbaric forms of ammunition being deliberately used against them by the occupying Power. Tragically, this massacre raises the total number of Palestinian civilians killed to more than 80 since the six-week Great March of Return began on 30 March.

The escalation of Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip, where unarmed Palestinian civilians at the Gaza border exercising their legitimate right to protest against this inhumane and absolutely illegal occupation continue to be wilfully

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attacked and murdered by the Israeli occupying forces, threatens to further destabilize the situation on the ground and to ignite yet another round of deadly violence by Israel. We call on the international community, with the United Nations Security Council at the forefront, to act immediately in accordance with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law to address this deepening crisis and prevent the complete destabilization of this situation.

In this regard, it must be stated that in the backdrop to the violence and volatility we are witnessing today is the provocative and illegal decision by the United States administration to officially move its embassy from Israel to the City of Jerusalem. This action — which is in blatant contravention of Security Council resolutions, including, inter alia, resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), and of the unequivocal prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force — has severely aggravated tensions and sensitivities, particularly at this time when the Palestinian people are marking the seventieth anniversary of their Nakbah, an ongoing tragedy whose wounds are deep and painful and continue to be deepened.

As a global and leading power, the United States had the ability to pressure Israel to end its violations against the Palestinian people, to respect international law and to create an environment that could break the political deadlock, bringing an end to Israel's 50-year occupation, and ensure a future of peace, security, prosperity and dignity for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Regrettably, rather than doing so, it has only continued to foster Israel's intransigence and impunity, shielding it from international censure and any real measures to bring this illegal situation and injustice to an end.

This latest action by the United States in Jerusalem has clearly and dangerously emboldened the right-wing Government in Israel to carry out its illegal policies and practices, including the murder of innocent civilians in broad daylight, without any fear of consequence, and emboldens it to further consolidate its control and unlawful de facto annexation of the City, along with the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard, we must recall the Security Council's unambiguous call on "those States that have established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City", as well as its determination that it "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations".

We call for respect of the Council's authority and decisions. These are facts and legislation that cannot be disregarded or ignored, regardless of political pretexts and illogical justifications. Moreover, we call for respect of the historic status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites, including at Haram al-Sharif, which continues to be subjected to provocations and incitement by Israeli extremists, as witnessed again just yesterday when Israeli extremist settlers broke into the Aqsa Mosque compound in large numbers under the protection of Israeli occupying forces and raised Israeli flags on the compound, provoking clashes with Muslim worshippers and Islamic Waqf guards there.

The unfolding situation makes it clear that, in word and deed, today's action by the current United States administration is not just inflaming an already volatile situation and provoking reckless violence, but also has the potential to further inflame religious sentiments of religious extremists, fuelling violent radicalism and strife in the region and beyond, with far-reaching repercussions. In the light of this extremely regrettable action as well as the unfolding dangerous situation on the ground, we call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to address this critical matter without delay and to act swiftly to uphold its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, reaffirming the validity of the relevant resolutions and demanding full respect for them.

We call on all States to reject all of these illegal actions and to insist on respect for international law and the relevant resolutions, and to act in accordance with their legal obligations in this regard. This must include condemnation of Israel's illegal and criminal behaviour vis-à-vis the Palestinian people under its foreign occupation, and rejection and non-recognition of its colonization of our land and of attempts by any other States to entrench and support this entirely illegal situation.

First and foremost, however, we must urgently call on the Security Council to act now and make its voice heard to stop the carnage being perpetrated against our people, particularly now at this moment in the Gaza Strip. The Council must act on its responsibilities under the Charter to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, including of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This is an urgent matter and is central to preserving international rules, norms and moral standards in all cases, to saving innocent civilian lives and to preventing the collapse of this situation so as to salvage whatever slim chances may remain for a just peace. To this end, it is urgent and imperative that the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation be protected in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Once more, given the extremely dangerous situation, we appeal to the Security Council to act urgently to avert the further destabilization of this extremely fragile situation, with due consideration for this sensitive juncture in the plight of the Palestinian people in the light of more than 50 years of the Israeli foreign occupation of their land and the marking, on 15 May 2018, of the passage of 70 years since the tragic Nakbah of the Palestinian people in 1948, a grave historical injustice that continues today and continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Immediate measures are vital for restoring the primacy of international law in the efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and make possible the establishment of just and lasting peace, whereby the Palestinian people can live in justice, dignity and peace and exercise their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom, in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and whereby a just solution can be found for the plight of Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

At this critical and sensitive moment, the Palestinian people and their leadership, alongside all those around the world who believe in international law and the path of justice as the most viable path to peace, are looking to the Security Council with high expectations for it to shoulder its responsibilities, in accordance with its Charter duties. We thus reiterate our appeal to the Council to act to end the occupation's brutality and massacres against our people; to bring a halt to its massive violations of their human rights; to ensure their protection; and to firmly uphold and implement all Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine, including with regard to Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

United Nations S/2018/459

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 May 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 14 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instruction from my Government and with reference to the letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Israeli regime to the United Nations (S/2018/443), and pursuant to my letter dated 9 May 2018 (S/2018/445) rejecting baseless allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to draw your attention to the following:

1. The Israeli regime's claim regarding a military action by Iran from the Syrian territory against their military positions in the occupied Golan Heights is false and unfounded and has its root in this regime's policy of aggression, deception and adventurism. Contrary to this claim and based on the communication from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Syrian Arab Republic dated 10 May 2018 (S/2018/447), the Israeli regime's forces initiated the aggression by launching rocket attacks and air strikes on 9 May 2018 against the Syrian territory. In the face of this aggression initiated by the Israelis, the Syrian army exercised its legitimate right to self-defence on 10 May and responded in an appropriate and proportionate manner.

2. The presence of a limited number of Iranian military advisers in Syria is on the invitation of the legitimate Syrian Government, is aimed at assisting Syrian forces and their allies in their fight against internationally designated terrorist groups and will continue as long as necessary. Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its right to self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

3. The new round of Israeli aggression, which constitutes a grave violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law, follows the recent series of severe defeats inflicted on terrorist groups in Syria and is an attempt to provide them with a respite, allowing them to regroup and rearm. These aggressions undermine the current fight against terrorist groups in Syria and threaten peace and security in the region.

4. Silence and inaction by the international community in the face of the acts of aggression and crime by the Israeli regime will lead to more similar acts, further exacerbating the situation in Syria and the surrounding region. The Islamic Republic of Iran calls upon the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to uphold their responsibilities by condemning the Israeli acts of aggression and requiring the Israeli regime to stop its aggressions and

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provocations, which undermine the fight against terrorism and dangerously threaten peace and security in the region.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/460

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 May 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 14 May 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period from 12 to 14 May 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) D. **Polyanskiy**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 14 May 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (12 May 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported seven incidents of gunfire: five in Aleppo Governorate and two in Ladhiqiyah Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported six incidents of gunfire: three in Hama Governorate and three in Idlib Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation in Shaykh Najjar, Aleppo Governorate: 445 food parcels were distributed. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered was 1.9 tons.

In total, 1,805 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,558.56 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 75 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 80,134 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is unchanged — it is still 2,509.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (13 May 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported eight incidents of gunfire: six in Aleppo Governorate and two in Ladhiqiyah Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported one incident of gunfire in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation in Ayn Tarma (4.5 kilometres north-east of Damascus), Damascus Governorate: 445 food parcels were distributed. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered was 1.9 tons.

In total, 1,806 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,560.46 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 105 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 80,239 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Three ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours with Sawa, Muh Hasan and Jadid Uqaydat in Dayr al-Zawr Governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 2,512.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (14 May 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported one incident of gunfire in Aleppo Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported one incident of gunfire in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 1,806 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,560.46 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 26 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 80,265 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged — it is still 2,512.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/461

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 14 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and in reference to the letters dated 4 April 2018 (S/2018/310) and 3 May 2018 (S/2018/434) from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, which contained allegations that were devoid of truth and distorted the facts in order to defame the State of Qatar, I should like to state the following:

- The State of Qatar rejects the allegations contained in the two letters from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain, and reiterates its categorical denial of those claims. In that connection, I should like to draw attention to the facts put forward in our letter dated 9 May 2018 (S/2018/441), which refuted allegations made by the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates regarding the same incidents alleged in the letters from Bahrain.

- That the Permanent Mission of Bahrain should send letters whose content mimics that of letters from the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates is hardly surprising. Both the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are in violation of their obligations under international agreements regulating air navigation, and are imposing an unjust blockade and illegal measures against Qatar that include closing the airspace of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to Qatari aircraft.

- Bahrain is abusing its role as the air navigation services provider for the region in order to achieve political objectives at the expense of the professionalism, accuracy, objectivity and neutrality required by the responsibilities entrusted to the Bahraini authorities as the air navigation services provider for the region. The declaration in the aforementioned letter from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain (S/2018/434) that his country "affirms its complete solidarity with the United Arab Emirates" is evidence of bias on the part of the air navigation services provider for the region and dispels such credibility as might have been attributed to the content of the Bahraini letters regarding the alleged incidents.

- The bias and favouritism of the Bahraini authorities, as acknowledged by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain, together with their failure to comply with the agreement on the provision of air navigation services for the region is additional evidence in support of what the State of Qatar has stated in its previous letters and the complaints it has filed with the International Civil Aviation Organization.

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- Qatar regrets that although the relevant parties in the State of Qatar have repeatedly urged the air navigation services provider in Bahrain to carry out its technical duties as prescribed by international law and the relevant air navigation agreements, that air navigation services provider has irresponsibly reneged on its obligations. Qatar expresses its deep distress and consternation at this attitude, which is a serious violation of the obligation to guarantee application of the relevant international air navigation standards, especially since this unprofessional and biased attitude could have dangerous implications for the security and safety of civil aviation. Participation by the Kingdom of Bahrain in the unjust blockade and the illegal arbitrary measures against the State of Qatar does not absolve the air traffic services provider in the Kingdom of Bahrain of its responsibilities and duties under the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation.

Lastly, while the State of Qatar reiterates that it complies with the provisions of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and international agreements regulating air navigation and the rules of international civil aviation, it condemns the abdication by the Kingdom of Bahrain of its responsibilities under agreements and guidelines regulating air navigation that entrusted Bahrain with the role of air navigation services provider for the region. Qatar stresses that this biased and unprofessional attempt by the Kingdom of Bahrain to exploit its functions for political purposes is a dangerous development that endangers the safety of air navigation in the region, threatens stability, and shows that Bahrain is not qualified to perform the functions of air navigation services provider. Qatar reiterates its call for the civil aviation authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain to be compelled to cooperate with the aviation sector in a professional, neutral, responsible and non-politicized fashion.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/462

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 May 2018

Original: English

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 25 November 2015 (S/PRST/2015/23). It also responds to the Council's request, in its resolution 2286 (2016), for reporting on the protection of medical care in armed conflict.

2. In my previous report (S/2017/414), I underlined that the most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of armed conflict. This remains my overarching priority. In this regard, dialogue and inclusive peace processes that address the parties' grievances and lead to sustainable solutions, coupled with a long-term holistic approach that addresses the root causes and prevents the escalation or recurrence of conflict, promotes human rights and the rule of law and strengthens governance and institutions, are essential.

3. In my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, issued in January 2018 (A/72/707-S/2018/43), I sought to forge a common vision, systems and capacities across the United Nations to support Member States in sustaining peace and building resilient and prosperous nations in line with their commitment to leave no one behind. I look forward to working with Member States to take forward its recommendations. At the same time, work continues within the United Nations to develop a prevention platform that will allow the system to maximize its existing tools and resources in support of a broad prevention agenda and greater accountability for violations.

4. Where we cannot prevent or resolve conflict, we must strengthen the protection of civilians. In doing so, we also contribute to the foundations for future peace. In my previous report, I identified three protection priorities: enhance respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and promote good practice by parties to conflict; protect the humanitarian and medical mission and accord priority to the protection of civilians in United Nations peace operations; and prevent forced displacement and pursue durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons. In the present report, I review progress made in relation to those priorities, with a focus on enhancing respect for international law and promoting good practice.

5. Section II below contains a review of the global state of the protection of civilians in armed conflict during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017. It reveals a state of unrelenting horror and suffering affecting millions of women, children and men across all conflicts. Civilians are routinely killed or maimed, and

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civilian objects damaged or destroyed, in targeted or indiscriminate attacks that frequently involve the widespread use of explosive weapons. Civilians are forced from their homes to meet a perilous fate, while countless others are missing. Humanitarian and medical personnel are frequently targeted and killed or prevented from responding to those in need. Meanwhile, conflict-driven food insecurity and the potential for famine leave millions of lives in the balance. All this, and the decimation of entire towns and cities and the once-vibrant communities and societies that were their lifeblood, undermine the prospects for peace and stability and the restoration of hope and opportunity for the future.

6. The state of the protection of civilians is bleak, and the need for action to address it is urgent. As discussed in section III below, as conflict becomes increasingly urbanized, with the potential to affect tens of millions of people, ensuring the effective implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law is of paramount importance. The targeting of or failure to protect civilians cannot go unchallenged. The Security Council and Member States can ill afford to abdicate their responsibilities in the face of widespread violations and allow political differences to prevent or undermine concerted action to address and prevent violations. The stakes for civilians — and for international peace and security — are simply too high.

7. Against that backdrop, there are glimmers of hope. First, there is growing recognition among Member States of the instrumental role that respect for international humanitarian and human rights law plays in their efforts to end and prevent the spillover and recurrence of armed conflict, and to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism. Second, there are practical steps that have been, and could again be, taken by parties to conflict and Member States to respect and ensure respect for the law and enhance the protection of civilians.

8. Drawing on these, in section IV below I recommend, first, that Member States develop national policy frameworks that establish clear institutional authorities and responsibilities for the protection of civilians; and second, that they support and facilitate expanded efforts to engage non-State armed groups to enter into action plans and develop codes of conduct, operational policy and other tools to ensure effective protection and accountability. Such actions would constitute an important advance towards effective implementation of the law and protection of civilians. At the same time, I recognize the continuing need for heightened advocacy and a concerted effort to ensure accountability for serious violations.

II. State of the protection of civilians

A. Widespread civilian deaths and injuries and impact on civilian objects

9. Civilian populations continue to bear the brunt of armed conflicts across the globe. Throughout 2017, tens of thousands of civilian women, children and men were killed or suffered appalling injuries as victims of deliberate or indiscriminate attacks by parties to conflicts affecting, inter alia, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen.

10. In 2017, the United Nations recorded the death or injury of more than 26,000 civilians in attacks in just six of those situations: 10,000 in Afghanistan, more than 8,000 in Iraq, some 2,600 in Somalia and approximately the same number in Yemen. In the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, attacks killed more than 1,100 and almost 2,000 civilians, respectively. The vast numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, combined with the testimony of victims and witnesses

and other reports, raise profound concerns as to the extent to which parties are taking constant care to spare civilians from the effects of hostilities, as required by international humanitarian law. Their obligation to do so, and the need for them to do so, cannot be emphasized enough.

11. The impact of conflict on civilians and civilian objects was particularly acute when fighting took place in densely populated areas and involved the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects. In the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, attacks involving air- and ground-launched explosive weapons reportedly killed and injured significant numbers of civilians in Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr, Homs, Idlib, Raqqah and Rif Dimashq and destroyed essential infrastructure, schools and hospitals. In Iraq, according to data verified by the United Nations, at least 4,200 civilians were killed and injured by shelling, air strikes and improvised explosive device attacks during operations to retake areas of Ninawa Governorate and Mosul city between October 2016 and July 2017. Other sources estimate that the number of civilian casualties was considerably higher. The fighting also led to the extensive destruction of homes and essential infrastructure.

12. The use of improvised explosive devices by non-State armed groups in Afghanistan, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic has also caused significant numbers of civilian casualties. In Afghanistan, for example, 624 civilians were killed and 1,232 injured by improvised explosive devices in 2017. The reported use of cluster munitions in 2017 in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen was of grave concern. I am also appalled by further reports of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, which seriously challenge the global and long-standing prohibition of such weapons, and the killing and injuring of even more innocent civilians. Such reports must be properly investigated. Where use is determined, Member States must find an appropriate way to identify those responsible and hold them to account.

13. As already reported (see S/2018/250), in 2017, sexual violence continued to be employed as a tactic of war, terrorism, torture and repression, including the targeting of victims on the basis of their actual or perceived ethnic, religious, political or clan affiliation. In many cases, such violence resulted in forcible displacement and dispersal of the targeted community, with corrosive effects on social cohesion. That alarming trend is common to a range of otherwise diverse conflicts, including in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. In those cases, to varying degrees, the strategic nature of sexual violence was reflected in the selective targeting of victims from specific ethnic, religious or political groups, mirroring the fault lines of the wider conflict or crisis and, in some cases, in the explicit nationalist or extremist ideologies espoused by the perpetrators. In such cases, conflict-related sexual violence has served as an expression of ethnic hatred or has been employed as part of "ethnic cleansing", often accompanied by insults based on the victim's identity and presumed allegiance.

14. Children continued to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict in 2017, and a further increase of cases of grave violations against children were verified. Armed violence often stripped away layers of protection afforded by families and society and led to a reduction of traditional safe spaces. Boys and girls were recruited and used in support roles or as combatants, including across borders, and surges in recruitment often coincided with increased levels of killing and maiming. Attacks on schools and hospitals as well as denials of humanitarian access impeded children's ability to obtain education, health care and vital humanitarian aid. Children were also subject to abduction, a tool often used to forcibly recruit children as well as for the purpose of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. Enabling children affected by war to regain their childhood through the provision of community-based

psychosocial, educational and vocational reintegration programmes has been an important factor in overcoming stigmatization, avoiding re-recruitment and breaking the cycles of violence. However, too many children were unable to benefit from such support owing to a lack of funding. Ensuring predictable and flexible funding for reintegration processes through strengthened collaboration between child protection actors and funding partners is therefore essential.

15. Concern mounted over attacks carried out on places of worship in a number of conflicts in 2017, including in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and Yemen. In Afghanistan, the United Nations documented 38 such attacks, resulting in 202 civilian deaths and 297 injuries — three times the number of the attacks carried out in 2016. Some attacks, including on two mosques in Kabul in August and October, appeared to deliberately target women. Conflict also continued to take its toll on journalists in 2017, with killings, injuries and threats reported in, inter alia, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Such incidents have a serious impact on independent reporting, which is essential for exposing human suffering, restraining belligerents and building pressure for political solutions and accountability.

B. Forced displacement

16. Forced displacement was a defining feature of conflict in 2017, swelling the ranks of the approximately 65 million people displaced by conflict and violence at the end of 2016, the vast majority of them within their own countries. By November 2017, there were a total of 6.1 million internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including 1.8 million newly displaced that year alone. Three million people in Yemen have been forced from their homes and, like those displaced in the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere, face significant protection and assistance needs. In Ukraine, an estimated 1.6 million people are internally displaced, with many unable to access essential services.

17. The resurgence of violence in the Central African Republic in 2017 caused further internal displacement affecting almost 700,000 people, while more than 500,000 out of a population of 4.7 million have fled abroad. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more than 2 million people were internally displaced by violence in 2017, doubling the overall number of the internally displaced to 4.5 million. As in other conflict-affected countries, displacement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is protracted, straining the capacities of the internally displaced and the communities that host them and leaving the displaced at risk of prolonged harm. In the Sudan, while displacement declined in Darfur and other areas in 2017, internally displaced persons faced continued violence, including killing and rape. In Somalia, forced evictions increased in 2017, affecting some 200,000 internally displaced, out of a displaced population of 2.1 million.

18. Some 1.9 million South Sudanese were displaced internally, some of them multiple times, as at the end of 2017. The militarization of camps and settlements for the internally displaced in South Sudan, as well as in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Nigeria, underlined the need to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of camps and settlements. An additional 2.4 million South Sudanese have sought refuge across borders, with Uganda hosting more than 1 million of them, in addition to refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

19. Uganda, Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon and other major refugee-hosting countries continue to demonstrate considerable support for refugees. The future global compact on refugees must strengthen the international response to large movements of

refugees, including by easing the burden on host countries, meeting the needs of refugees and host communities and securing durable solutions. Similarly, the twentieth anniversary in 2018 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement must mark the consolidation of efforts by Member States, the United Nations and other relevant actors to strengthen the response to internal displacement. This includes better understanding of urban displacement and strengthening the response to protracted internal displacement.

C. Constraints on humanitarian access

20. In 2017, widespread and persistent constraints on humanitarian access jeopardized humanitarian operations and the ability of affected populations to meet their basic needs in several conflicts. Besides active hostilities and logistical challenges, the most severe constraints were bureaucratic impediments and attacks against humanitarian personnel.

21. Bureaucratic impediments were reported in several conflict-affected areas, including Chad, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip continued to be restricted on security grounds, contributing to the deterioration in the humanitarian situation and compromising access to essential services and health care. The rate of the timely approval of permit applications for Palestinians to leave Gaza by way of Israel, including for humanitarian reasons, dropped to 54 per cent, the lowest in a decade. In non-Government-controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine, the imposition by the de facto authorities of additional registration requirements for humanitarian programming and activities compounded an already cumbersome process.

22. Counter-terrorism measures, including lengthy administrative processes and legislation criminalizing certain activities necessary for the conduct of humanitarian operations, continued to have an impact on humanitarian action. Member States should meet their security objectives while safeguarding principled humanitarian action by ensuring that counter-terrorism measures are designed and implemented in accordance with international law. One important example of this is the European Union directive on combating terrorism of March 2017, which exempts from its scope humanitarian activities provided by impartial humanitarian organizations recognized by international law.[1]

23. Particular concerns exist over the use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare, which is prohibited by international humanitarian law. Siege and siege-like situations are having a devastating impact on civilian populations. At the end of 2017 in the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, some 420,000 people were living in nine besieged areas while an additional 2.9 million were in hard-to-reach areas. Only 820,000 of those people received some assistance during the year.

24. In Yemen, the provision of assistance to those in need, nearly 7 million of whom were at risk of famine, was extremely challenging in 2017. While restrictions imposed by the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia, were gradually lifted as from the end of November, some remained until the end of the year, preventing the movement of humanitarian personnel and the entry of commercial vessels carrying humanitarian assets into Hudaydah port.

25. Such methods compound food insecurity and hunger. Global hunger is on the rise after declining for more than two decades, with conflict cited as the main reason

[1] See directive (EU) 2017/541, para. 38.

for that reversal. Ten out of the 13 major food crises in 2016 were conflict-driven.[2] Compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law is essential in protecting civilians affected by conflicts against hunger.

D. Attacks against humanitarian workers and assets

26. Violence against, or the detention or abduction of, humanitarian workers, often involving national staff, continued to impede humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 389 security incidents were reported in just the second half of 2017, limiting access to humanitarian assistance for more than 1 million people. In South Sudan, 30 humanitarian workers were killed in 2017. In Somalia, 116 humanitarian workers were subjected to violence, with 16 killed and 31 abducted. In Mali, security incidents involving humanitarian workers almost doubled, from 68 in 2016 to 135 in 2017. There were also reports of the looting of humanitarian assets in those and other situations.

E. Attacks against and other interference with the medical mission

27. The reporting period saw further attacks against medical workers, patients and medical facilities, equipment and transport, and interference with the provision of impartial medical care. Incidents included direct attacks against medical workers and facilities; the removal of medical supplies from humanitarian convoys and warehouses; the use of medical facilities for military purposes; and the threat of legal or other sanctions for providing medical care to sick or wounded combatants from opposition forces. In 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded 322 attacks across conflict-affected countries including Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Those attacks resulted in 242 deaths and 229 injuries among medical personnel and patients.

28. In the Central African Republic, 18 medical facilities were attacked in 2017, with seven medical personnel killed. There were also reports of non-State armed groups occupying medical facilities and preventing ambulances from transporting the sick and wounded. A similar pattern was evident in Libya, with 16 attacks on medical facilities and interference with ambulances, as well as assaults on, and the abduction of, medical personnel. In the Syrian Arab Republic, 112 attacks against medical facilities and workers were verified by the United Nations, while 645,000 medical items were removed from inter-agency cross-line convoys during the year. In Afghanistan, in addition to attacks being carried out against medical workers, 147 medical facilities were forcibly closed following threats from armed groups. The duration of closures varied from several hours to several months, affecting access to health care for tens of thousands of people. WHO estimates that in 2017, more than 730,000 Afghans, with women constituting 65 per cent of that number, were unable to access needed health-care services.

29. I welcome the efforts of Member States to implement resolution 2286 (2016) concerning the protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, and their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and my predecessor's recommendations. Co-chaired by Canada and Switzerland, the informal

[2] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Food Programme, *Monitoring Food Security in Countries with Conflict Situations*, issue No. 3 (January 2018).

group of friends of resolution 2286 (2016) seeks to mobilize leadership for protecting the medical mission and promotes the issue in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. In October 2017, 12 Member States, including France, signed the French-led declaration on the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel in conflict. Actors in the United Nations system continue to support these efforts. WHO, for example, is rolling out a surveillance system for the collection of data regarding attacks on health care.

30. At the national level, efforts to promote cooperation and the exchange of information among stakeholders and to adopt and implement precautionary measures continued. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have worked with Governments to adopt laws that protect health care and ensure respect for the emblems of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Such developments are welcome, although more could be done to ensure compliance with the law and accountability for its violation; to strengthen the collection of data; to facilitate exchanges on good practices in implementing resolution 2286 (2016), including in capitals and regional forums; and to ensure that the protection of medical care is included in the capacity-building of partner forces and in military doctrine and training.

F. The missing

31. Alarming numbers of persons remain missing in armed conflicts. Parties are not taking action to prevent persons from going missing, to increase the chances of accounting for those who do, or to uphold the right of families to know the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives. ICRC has launched a four-year project, from 2017, to develop professional standards and practices in relation to the missing and their families. Parties to conflict and Member States must ensure the implementation of the law as it applies to missing persons.

G. Accountability for violations

32. Fundamental to ensuring respect for international law is ensuring accountability for violations. The reporting period saw positive developments in national-level investigations and prosecutions, including through the exercise of universal jurisdiction. Specialized war crimes units in a number of European and other States investigated or prosecuted 126 individuals suspected of having committed international crimes, resulting in 13 convictions.[3] Hybrid courts also have a potentially important role to play in holding the perpetrators of serious violations to account. I welcome the progress made in 2017 towards the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic. Such developments notwithstanding, the need remains for prompt and concerted action to enhance accountability at the national level.

33. Where national action is lacking, international investigative and judicial mechanisms can ensure accountability. The conviction in 2017 by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia of Ratko Mladic for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, more than 20 years after their perpetration, is a reminder of the long reach of international justice and of the Tribunal's critical role in its development. From its establishment in 1993 to the end of its operations in 2017, the Tribunal sentenced 90 individuals for genocide, war crimes and crimes against

[3] See Trial International, *Make Way for Justice #4: Momentum towards Accountability: Universal Jurisdiction Annual Review 2018* (2018).

humanity and inspired national prosecutions. The cause of criminal justice is a long-term undertaking and deserves our full support.

II. United Nations peace operations and protection of civilians

34. United Nations peace operations are important tools for protecting civilians in some of the situations referred to above. Operating in increasingly challenging circumstances, the protection of civilians has become one of the most important tasks for many peacekeeping operations. Activities include supporting the implementation of local peace agreements in the Central African Republic; providing physical protection to thousands of civilians in South Sudan; and rapid deployments to places in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where civilians could potentially come under the threat of physical violence. Regular reporting on civilian casualties by United Nations peace operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Somalia supports targeted advocacy aimed at changing the behaviour of parties to conflict.

35. United Nations peacekeeping missions face new environments and contexts, including complex and asymmetrical threats and political violence, that challenge traditional approaches to protection. Missions continue to innovate, and we are supporting them by revising our peacekeeping policy on the protection of civilians and developing a policy on the prevention of and responses to conflict-related sexual violence. Efforts to improve performance include new directives and training for military and police forces on child protection and the protection of civilians and an operational manual for child protection officers in peace operations.

36. The importance of the protection mandate is reflected in a renewed focus on the accountability of senior leadership for its implementation and my commitment to investigate reports of underperformance by peacekeepers. It is also reflected in the independent reviews of all peacekeeping missions that are intended to ensure that they are fit for purpose. In addition, protecting civilians is closely related to the recent report entitled "Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers: we need to change the way we are doing business", which contains important recommendations to improve performance.

37. Strengthening the work of peacekeepers also requires the commitment of Member States to find consensus around the language and implications of peacekeeping tasks, including clarity regarding the expectations of peacekeepers and recognition of those situations that may be outside their capacity to respond. It also requires the commitment of financial contributors to ensure that missions are properly resourced, and of troop contributors to provide contingents that are up to this challenging task. Finally, protection in peacekeeping requires the commitment of host States and parties to conflict to fulfil their legal responsibility to protect civilians and allow peacekeepers to implement their mandate.

III. Revisiting protection priority I — enhance respect for international law and promote good practice by parties to conflict

38. As noted in my previous report, the appalling suffering inflicted upon civilians would be significantly reduced if belligerents respected applicable international humanitarian and human rights law, and if third States took the measures necessary to ensure respect for the law, as required by international humanitarian law. As conflicts are increasingly being fought in densely populated towns and cities, with the potential to negatively affect the lives of tens of millions of people in the future,

enhancing respect for the law and promoting good practices have perhaps never been more urgent than they are today.

A. Protecting civilians and civilian objects in urban warfare

39. More than 50 million people are currently affected by conflict in urban areas. That number will likely increase as urbanization continues and parties to conflict, in particular non-State armed groups, take advantage of the urban environment to alter the balance of power between themselves and conventional armed forces and complicate State efforts to protect civilians.

40. Respecting the law and protecting civilians in such situations is, and will continue to be, an essential and significant challenge for parties to conflict. This is due to the high density of civilian populations; the possibility of the sudden and unexpected presence of civilians among combatants; the commingling of combatants and military objectives with civilians and civilian objects, which may at times be deliberate; the vulnerability to damage and the interdependence of basic service infrastructure, such as water and electricity systems, that is essential for the well-being of civilians; and the likelihood of large outflows of civilians in need of immediate protection and assistance, including access to specialized trauma and other medical care.

Use of explosive weapons in populated areas

41. Of particular concern is the widespread use in urban areas of air-dropped bombs, artillery, mortars, rockets, improvised explosive devices and other explosive weapons, and the consequences for civilians. It is reported that in 2017, out of a total of 42,972 people killed or injured by explosive weapons, 31,904, or three out of every four victims, were civilians — a 38 per cent increase compared with 2016. When explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 92 per cent of the casualties were civilians. The Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan saw the highest numbers of civilian casualties, with air-launched explosive weapons the leading cause, followed by improvised explosive devices and ground-launched weapons.[4]

42. Those statistics are alarming and justify urgent international action to address this problem. It is all the more pressing when one considers the well-documented and devastating reverberating or long-term effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas — effects that are largely foreseeable and must be taken into account in the planning and conduct of military operations. As seen in recent years in, inter alia, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, effects of hostilities on civilian objects include the extensive destruction of homes, hospitals, schools, workplaces and essential infrastructure, with reverberating effects on water and electricity systems that increase the risk and spread of disease and food insecurity. Civilians are displaced and may lack access to lifesaving and other assistance and remain exposed to further violence. Residential and other urban areas are contaminated with lethal explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, the identification and removal of which is painstaking and costly and can prevent access to essential services and the return of displaced persons. In the long term, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is lost, if not reversed, while reconstruction requirements and the associated costs are overwhelming. I would again call on parties to conflict to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas.

[4] See Action on Armed Violence, *Explosive Violence Monitor 2017* (April 2018).

43. I welcome the increasing interest in this problem among high contracting parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and on the part of the 19 States that adopted the communiqué of the African regional meeting on the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, held in Maputo in November 2017. In the communiqué, it was acknowledged that there is a need for national, regional and global action, including on avoiding the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas and the development of a political declaration to address the problem. Multilateral efforts in that regard, including the Austrian-led process to achieve a political declaration on the subject and the German initiative to discuss the problem within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, warrant the constructive engagement of all Member States. Progress on those efforts would provide important recognition of the problem and commit Member States to specific steps to address it.

44. In 2017, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs published a compilation of military policies and practices on explosive weapons in populated areas. Drawing on the tactical directives developed by the former International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and the indirect-fire policy of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the compilation demonstrates how military forces have strengthened the protection of civilians by limiting the use of explosive weapons in certain circumstances, and without compromising mission effectiveness. Research shows that the tactical directives and other reforms of ISAF did not undermine force protection or give non-State armed groups a significant military advantage,[5] and that mission effectiveness increased.[6]

45. Practices have also been adopted by some non-State armed groups to reduce the impact of explosive weapons on civilians. These include advance warning, the consideration of tactical alternatives to explosive weapons, and the use of observers to ensure the accurate targeting of military objectives.[7]

B. The fundamental legal obligation and common interest to respect and protect civilians

46. Respect for, and the protection of, civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of hostilities is, first and foremost, a legal obligation of all parties to conflict for which they must be held to account. Some military forces have recognized that ensuring respect for the law and protecting civilians are important components of mission effectiveness. This was a key lesson that was learned by ISAF and AMISOM and that led to the above-mentioned reforms[8] and is reflected in current military policy.[9] It is also apparent in the practices of some non-State armed groups.[10]

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[5] See C. Kolenda, R. Reid, M. Retzius and C. Rogers, *The Strategic Costs of Civilian Harm: Applying Lessons from Afghanistan to Current and Future Conflicts* (Open Society Foundations, June 2016).

[6] See remarks of Larry Lewis to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Drones, 12 July 2017, available at http://appgdrones.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Prepared-comments-Larry-Lewis.pdf.

[7] See Geneva Call, *In Their Words* (2017).

[8] See Kolenda et al., *The Strategic Costs of Civilian Harm*, and Lewis.

[9] See, for example, Department of the Army, *Protection of Civilians* (ATP 3-07.6) (2015); United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* (2017); Department of the Army/United States Marine Corps, *Urban Operations* (ATP 3-06 MCTP 12-10B) (2017); and European Union Military Committee, *Avoiding and Minimizing Collateral Damage in European Union-Led Military Operations* (EEAS(2015) 772 REV 8) (2016), paras. 8–9.

[10] See Geneva Call, *In Their Words*.

47. Ensuring respect for the law and the effective protection of civilians is directly relevant to broader efforts by Member States to respond to terrorism and prevent violent extremism. In that regard, the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism calls upon Member States to ensure that the use of military action to counter the expansion of violent extremist groups complies fully with international humanitarian and human rights law. In General Assembly resolution 70/291, Member States also stressed that when counter-terrorism efforts violate international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, they not only betray the values they seek to uphold, but may also fuel violent extremism that can be conducive to terrorism. In a recent study on violent extremism in Africa, it was noted that, while the lack of education and poverty have an influence on radicalization, in the vast majority of cases the final tipping point was an act of State violence and abuse of power, including disregard for international law.[11]

48. Ensuring respect for the law and protecting civilians are also fundamentally important from the perspective of restoring peace and preventing the spread and recurrence of conflict. Significant numbers of civilian casualties, coupled with the devastation of entire cities and towns and the ensuing displacement that we see today, result in a complex myriad of profoundly negative humanitarian, development, social, political and other consequences. These serve only to perpetuate conflict and, in so doing, undermine the prospects for future peace and stability in the countries, and potentially the regions, concerned.

C. Developing good policy and practice at the national and regional levels

49. I am encouraged by the efforts of a range of actors at the national and regional levels to engage and support Member States and their military forces, as well as non-State armed groups, in strengthening protection and respect for the law and developing good practices.

50. For example, in October 2017, the Government of Afghanistan adopted a national policy on the prevention and mitigation of civilian casualties that had been developed with the support of the United Nations and the Centre for Civilians in Conflict. The Government's commitment to the mitigation of civilian harm is reported to have led to fewer civilian deaths and injuries from national military and police operations in 2017.

51. Similar engagement by the Centre for Civilians in Conflict and other organizations has taken place with regard to the development by the Government of Nigeria of a national policy on civilian harm mitigation and the establishment of a civilian casualty mitigation team by Civil-Military Cooperation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Reference should also be made to the established practice of engaging parties to conflict that are listed in my reports on children and armed conflict to develop and implement action plans aimed at ending the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. To date, 28 listed parties have signed 29 action plans pertaining to the prevention of the six violations against children, namely, killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children as soldiers, sexual violence against children, abduction of children, attacks against schools and hospitals, and denial of access.

52. Demonstrating the important role of national lawmakers and policymakers in strengthening the protection of civilians, the Congress of the United States of America established important protection-related requirements in the National Defense

[11] See United Nations Development Programme, *Journey to Extremism in Africa* (2017), p. 73.

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, responding in part to recommendations from InterAction and other United States-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Those requirements included a report detailing the plans of the Department of Defense to enhance security assistance programmes with measures to prevent and mitigate harm to civilians, and a requirement for an annual Department of Defense report on civilian casualties resulting from United States military operations, including the date, location and type of the operation in which they were harmed. The Department must also describe its process for investigating civilian deaths and the steps it has taken to mitigate civilian harm, and must take into account credible reports of civilian casualties from NGOs and other public sources when preparing the report. This is one example of a practical step towards greater transparency and enhancing the protection of civilians.

53. At the regional level, the United Nations is supporting the development of a compliance framework to prevent and address possible violations of international law by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. It includes measures relating to the selection and screening of units and personnel; a United Nations-Joint Force planning cell to support the planning and conduct of operations and the inclusion of precautionary measures to prevent civilian harm; the implementation of after-action reviews of incidents involving civilian casualties; and the establishment of monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms.

54. As regards non-State armed groups, to date 17 such groups have signed action plans with the United Nations to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers. In addition, Geneva Call's "deeds of commitment", through which such groups pledge to respect and be held publicly accountable for the implementation of specific humanitarian norms relating, for example, to the prohibition of the use of anti-personnel mines and of sexual violence, have yielded concrete results. These include the destruction of large stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and the release of child soldiers. In 2017, Geneva Call trained 1,300 members of 29 armed groups on international humanitarian law. Later in 2018, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Geneva Call will convene an expert meeting on the use by non-State actors of explosive weapons in populated areas as part of ongoing efforts to encourage such groups to avoid causing harm to civilians.

IV. Advancing protection priority I — recommended actions

55. My previous report contained several recommendations for enhancing respect for international law and promoting good practices by parties to conflict. Building on those, I would recommend to Member States the additional, concrete actions set out below to further advance protection priority I.

Action 1: Develop national policy frameworks on the protection of civilians

56. To ensure the effective implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law, Member States should develop a national policy framework that builds upon good practice and establishes clear institutional authorities and responsibilities for the protection of civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of hostilities. This is particularly urgent, not least because of the increasing incidence of urban conflict and the propensity of some military forces conducting urban operations to rely on aerial assets and partner forces while limiting the deployment of ground forces. That can limit access to reliable intelligence, the accuracy of target selection, the estimation of collateral damage and the implementation of post-attack responses to civilian harm. Such circumstances demand that the parties concerned take additional steps to spare civilians and civilian objects from the effects of hostilities. With that in mind, and as

detailed in the annex, a national protection policy framework should include the minimum elements described below.

57. First, a proactive approach to civilian harm mitigation and response should be included. This would emphasize accountable leadership for protecting civilians and the creation and maintenance of an organizational culture that prioritizes civilian harm mitigation. It would also provide for the establishment of specific capabilities to track, analyse, respond to and learn from allegations of civilian harm, as well as joint civilian and military planning for the protection of civilians, including in the context of coalition operations.

58. Given the high degree of civilian harm and other, broader negative consequences of the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in towns, cities and other populated areas, as well as the potential for such use to violate the prohibition of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, the policy framework should also include a clear presumption against such use. This approach should be further developed in a specific operational policy that would include tactical alternatives to such use, and specific steps to be taken to avoid civilian harm in circumstances where such use might be unavoidable.

59. Second, the policy framework should seek to strengthen the protection of civilians by partner forces. Security assistance to partner forces whose actions violate international humanitarian law can give rise to potential legal and reputational risks for the State providing such assistance. Such actions also risk entrenching existing political and other grievances that may lie at the root of the conflict and undermine efforts to broker sustained peace. Preventing such risks means promoting the protection of civilians with partner forces and ensuring their compliance with the law. To that end, the policy framework should define the scope and means of engagement with partners, establish clear lines of communication, ensure regular dialogue between parties on all matters of humanitarian concern and establish the conditions under which assistance would be withheld.

60. Third, the policy framework should provide the basis for the development and adoption of legislation that conditions the export of arms on respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and requires pre-export assessments of the risk of unlawful use and end-use monitoring. Several Member States have already adopted strong controls with respect to their arms exports. At the end of 2017, 92 Member States had become parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. I would urge other States to follow suit.

61. Fourth, given the increasing incidence of urban conflict, the policy framework should provide the basis for the establishment of specific urban warfare training schools and greater resort to scenario-based training. This would allow military forces to be better prepared to protect civilians in urban settings, by facilitating greater reflection on the specificities and vulnerabilities of the urban environment and ways and means of protecting civilians in such situations.

Action 2: Enhance compliance by non-State armed groups

62. Enhancing respect for the law also requires changing the behaviour and improving the practices of non-State armed groups. Training and the development of codes of conduct, unilateral declarations and special agreements, as envisaged under international humanitarian law, through which groups expressly commit to comply with their obligations or undertake commitments that may go beyond what are required by the law, can play a key role and should be encouraged. These could usefully include specific civilian harm mitigation measures as outlined above.

63. Such tools send a clear signal to the groups' members, can lead to the establishment of appropriate internal disciplinary measures and also provide an important basis for follow-up interventions. However, it is critically important that such tools and the commitments and principles therein be incorporated into instructions and communicated to the groups' members. Enhancing respect for the law on the part of non-State armed groups through dialogue and the development of such tools necessarily requires sustained engagement by humanitarian and other relevant actors.

64. It is recommended that actions 1 and 2 be part of a broad and coordinated effort to engage and support Member States and their military forces, as well as non-State armed groups, at the national and regional levels in developing the necessary policy and other tools.

Action 3: Promote compliance through advocacy and accountability

65. The development of policy frameworks and other measures to implement and ensure respect for international law would constitute an important advance towards more effective protection of civilians. At the same time, the need for global-level advocacy remains essential for further strengthening of the protection of civilians.

66. Central to such advocacy is the need for a concerted effort to overcome a perceived lack of empathy and outrage among the public at large concerning the plight of civilians affected by conflict in other countries. In 2017, building on the original "Not a Target" campaign of Médecins sans frontières, World Humanitarian Day marked the start of a global effort to raise awareness of the human cost of armed conflict and demand that world leaders act, including by ensuring greater respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. Further steps include improving our data collection, and its disaggregation by sex and age, to facilitate evidence-based analysis of trends in civilian harm and improved public reporting.

67. More attention is also urgently required with respect to ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, not least because the vast number of allegations of such violations continue to massively outweigh their actual investigation and prosecution. In line with their international obligations, I reiterate my call upon Member States to undertake credible and effective investigations into allegations of serious violations and hold perpetrators to account, with the support of the United Nations, as necessary. In the absence of either the willingness or the ability to do so, a number of Member States have resorted to universal jurisdiction to prosecute international crimes. Other Member States may wish to consider this possibility to contribute to the fight against impunity.

68. To help overcome problems relating to national capacity and resources, I would also urge greater consideration of the use of hybrid courts and the provision of international assistance to national courts. In this regard, I would echo the call from the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and from the Security Council urging the African Union Commission and the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan to take the steps necessary to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

69. Where national action is lacking, greater recourse should be made to international mechanisms. In this regard, I would urge States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and all Member States to cooperate fully with the Court.

70. I would also urge greater willingness on the part of Member States in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to set aside political differences and take concerted action to ensure accountability for

international crimes. This includes establishing and supporting commissions of inquiry and other such mechanisms or, in the case of the Security Council, the referral of situations to the International Criminal Court where national authorities fail to act. I note that several Member States, including some permanent members of the Security Council, have called for an end to the use of the veto in situations involving the perpetration of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide.

71. Greater consideration could also be given to the utility of targeted sanctions imposed by the Security Council as a response to violations, and how such sanctions might be strengthened.

V. Conclusion

72. The present report paints a very bleak picture of the current state of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It is a picture of immeasurable human and societal decimation — an inevitable consequence of the resort to arms without sufficient willingness on the part of all concerned to fully respect and ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian and human rights law. The report also offers some hope. In particular, the development of national policy frameworks that establish clear institutional authorities and responsibilities for the protection of civilians would significantly strengthen respect for the law, including by partner forces. The same can be said for the promotion of and support for similar initiatives with non-State armed groups. But these alone will not be sufficient.

73. The year 2019 will mark 20 years since the protection of civilians was placed on the agenda of the Security Council during a Canadian presidency. In 1999, it was the brutality in Sierra Leone, the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and the genocide and displacement in the Great Lakes region that drove Canada to bring the issue of the protection of civilians before the Council. As the then-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Lloyd Axworthy, said at the time: "Promoting the protection of civilians in armed conflict is no sideshow to the Council's mandate for ensuring international peace and security; it is central to it. The ultimate aim of the Council's work is to safeguard the security of the world's people, not just the States in which they live."

74. Today, while some of the contexts and parties have changed, as shown clearly in the present report, the suffering of civilians and the need for respect for the law remain constant. So too does the centrality of protection to the Security Council's mandate for ensuring international peace and security. The twentieth anniversary of the protection-of-civilians agenda, therefore, provides an opportune moment to take stock: to review the gains of the past 20 years; to identify areas that require further attention and progress, now and in the years ahead; and to chart a future course of action by the Security Council, Member States and other actors to further strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict. That includes greater consideration of the role of the protection of civilians in the broader context of crisis prevention, which, for the sake of the millions currently exposed to, and at risk of, violence and displacement around the world, remains an overarching priority.

Annex

Action 1: Develop national policy frameworks on the protection of civilians

Drawing on existing good practice and policy, a national protection policy framework should include the minimum elements described below.

1. **A proactive approach to civilian harm mitigation and response**

Leadership, culture and training

The policy framework should emphasize the critical importance of leadership for protecting civilians from harm. This includes the need for leaders (both civilian and military) at all levels to understand and communicate to their subordinates their legal obligation to protect civilians and civilian objects and its importance to mission effectiveness; and to ensure the existence within their organizations of a culture that prioritizes civilian harm mitigation. It also includes ensuring leader accountability for fulfilling these responsibilities. To support the existence of such a climate, the framework should establish focused, iterative and graduated training modules on the protection of civilians and civilian harm mitigation throughout the professional military education system, as well as unit-specific training at the operational level.

Civilian casualty tracking, reporting and response

The policy framework should also establish specific capabilities, standards and methodology to track, analyse and respond to allegations of civilian harm, such as along the lines of the Civilian Casualty Tracking Cell of the International Security Assistance Force. Such capabilities should be used to enable assessments that identify the causal factors that contribute to civilian casualties and inform the necessary adjustments to ongoing and future operations. Provision should be made for the use of reliable data from third parties (such as local and national officials, United Nations actors and civil society) and for regular, public reporting on the number of allegations, response actions and their outcomes, including in the context of coalition operations.

The policy framework should also outline the process for post-incident response, including the investigation and prosecution of serious violations, the transparent communication of findings and the provision of post-harm assistance to victims and their families.

Joint planning and engagement with partners

The policy framework should strengthen joint civilian and military planning for the protection of civilians in specific operations and ensure regular dialogue with humanitarian actors on protection concerns. Guidance should also be provided on how to safely and responsibly engage with local communities and civil society on protection concerns. In addition, the framework should provide for engaging other Member States, as well as regional or international partners, to share good practices, including in relation to tactics, techniques and procedures, training and the provision of security assistance.

A presumption against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

The policy framework should include a clear presumption against the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, which should be based on a clear understanding of the area effects of various types of explosive weapons and the resultant risk posed to civilians in the short and long terms. Such an understanding should take into account technical data relating to the expected performance of the

weapons in a conflict setting; an analysis of the practical procedures through which the weapons are applied to targets in operational use (such as the practices of "registration of fires" and "bracketing"); and an understanding that urban terrain and infrastructure have an impact on the employment and effectiveness of weapons.

This presumption should be further developed in a specific operational policy that provides for tactical alternatives to the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, and for specific steps to be taken to mitigate civilian harm in circumstances in which such use is unavoidable. These should draw on existing operational policies and practices, including the need for higher command authority for such use to reflect the increased risk to the civilian population and enable access to additional intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance resources; and the implementation of collateral damage estimation and battle damage assessments. Existing weaknesses, such as in collateral damage estimation, would also need to be addressed.[1]

2. A commitment to strengthen the protection of civilians by partner forces

The policy framework should include a commitment to strengthen the protection of civilians by partner forces. Such a commitment would clearly define the scope and means of engagement with partners, establish clear lines of communication and ensure that there is regular dialogue between parties on all matters of humanitarian concern. There should be continuous assessment of partner conduct through the prism of international humanitarian and human rights law as appropriate, and the implementation of measures that help to better protect civilians, as well as training and instruction on the application of the law and good practices for civilian harm mitigation. The provision of other forms of military training, as well as funding, the transfer of arms and other military support, should be contingent upon partner forces' commitment and performance in protecting civilians and ensuring respect for international law.

3. Conditioning arms exports on respect for international law

Whether in the context of security assistance or the export of arms in general, the policy framework should provide the basis for the adoption of legislation that requires pre-export assessments of the risk of unlawful use. Such assessments should be based on the aggregated risk of unlawful use given prior conduct as well as capacity and competence. This requires access to the information necessary to evaluate whether there is such a risk. Should an assessment reveal a substantial risk that the weapons being exported could be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian or human rights law, then the export should not be authorized. Furthermore, provision should be made for arms exports to be accompanied by customized technical assistance focused on appropriate lawful use and management of the specific items.

In the event of allegations of serious violations, tripwires should be established for the reassessment of certain arms export authorizations and the identification of options for preventing the use of certain weapons systems. This can also include remedial training to address concerns and restore assistance.

[1] L. Lewis and R. Goodman, "Civilian casualties: we need better estimates — not just better numbers", *Just Security* (22 March 2018), available from https://www.justsecurity.org/54181/civilian-casualties-estimates-not-numbers/.

4. Developing military competence in protecting civilians during urban warfare

Given the increasing incidence of urban conflict, the policy framework should provide the basis for the development of military competence in protecting civilians during urban combat. This should include the establishment of specific urban warfare training schools and greater resort to scenario-based training. That would allow military forces to be better prepared to protect civilians in urban settings by facilitating greater reflection on the specificities and vulnerabilities of the urban environment and ways and means for protecting civilians in such situations, such as tactical alternatives to the use of explosive weapons, the anticipation of and response to population displacement, and the provision of front-line trauma care for sick and wounded civilians as well as combatants. That in turn would usefully inform future operations, training, doctrine and further policy development. Access to such resources should be available to other military forces.